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Operational activities of the United Nations
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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](#) and [75/233](#), 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 and the additional mandates contained in resolution [76/4](#) in that regard.

In a year when developing countries were struggling to recover from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its socioeconomic impacts, the report shows that the repositioned United Nations development system is providing more integrated, efficient and better-quality support to country needs and priorities on sustainable development. Resident coordinators are empowered as leaders of United Nations country teams that are providing more tailored support, drawing on regional assets through the regional collaborative platforms and benefiting from improved United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and other planning tools. There is ongoing progress in reconfiguring United Nations country teams to ensure that the necessary expertise and skill sets are in place to deliver on the priorities in the Cooperation Frameworks.

* [A/77/50](#).



Building on its experience in supporting countries as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations development system is delivering a scaled-up, integrated response to countries' sustainable development needs and priorities, aligned with the priorities contained in the 2020 quadrennial review. This provides a solid basis for supporting countries' just transitions in the areas of digital connectivity, food systems and energy, which can have multiplying effects across all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Looking ahead, the report outlines key areas to ensure that the progress realized so far in country configuration, regional support, business operations and system-wide results reporting and evaluation translates into ambitious results at the scale needed during this decade of action to achieve success by 2030. Full adherence to the 2020 quadrennial review guidance and the dual reporting at the core of the United Nations development system reforms will be central to our efforts. Similarly, building on experience gained in preparing for the summits and high-level events in 2021, we will need to take full advantage of the convening role of the resident coordinators to attract partnerships and financing at an unprecedented scale to achieve the Goals. Lastly, delivering on the funding compact commitments towards more predictable and sustainable funding, including the full funding of the resident coordinator system, is a necessary condition for our collective success.

The findings in the present report paint an encouraging picture. It shows the commitment of United Nations development system entities to putting the reforms to work to support the Goals. However, given the challenges ahead of us in the next year and beyond, we must not be complacent. The reform of the United Nations development system can only go so far. To fully deliver the 2030 Agenda, we have a collective responsibility to bring more scale, ambition and urgency to our action. This is the time to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. The lives of billions of people across the globe depend on keeping the promise of the Goals, which remain the world's best chance for a future of peace, dignity and prosperity.

The report draws on the findings of surveys administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs between December 2021 and January 2022, addressed to programme country Governments, headquarters of United Nations development entities, resident coordinators and, for the first time in 2022, contributing Governments and United Nations country teams. Inputs were sought from across the system, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and its individual entities. Financial data were sourced primarily from the database and reporting system managed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. I thank the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its ongoing efforts to support the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and its implementation.

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I. Introduction

1. The year 2021 had the potential to reignite the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals through an effective and just global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Decisive and coordinated action at all levels could have brought the global pandemic to an end, led to a surge in financial support to nations, tipped the scales in favour of ambitious climate action and generated fresh momentum around key transitions.

2. Commendable efforts in many areas notwithstanding, global ambition and action have fallen short of what was needed to end the pandemic and foster a green, sustainable and inclusive recovery. The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inequitable global response, have set back our efforts to advance the Goals by many years. The number of people living in poverty, for example, is estimated to have increased by 131 million in 2020 alone, and progress in the advancement of women's rights may have been set back by a generation. In early 2022, the impacts of the conflict in Ukraine have amplified these challenges, with rippling effects on food security, energy and finance across the globe. With instability in international markets, the disruption of supply chains and the squeeze in countries' fiscal space, we face the risk of ever larger gaps in the investments to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The effect of these failings is an expanding gap and growing distrust between and within States, and a broader undermining of confidence in multilateralism.

3. Given the continued geopolitical tensions, protracted conflicts, record levels of displacement and increasing impacts of climate change, much greater solidarity, ambition and scale in our collaboration and actions for sustainable development will be needed. I remain confident that we still have an opportunity to make bold changes towards more inclusive, equitable, gender-equal and low-carbon economies. Together, we can still rescue the Sustainable Development Goals, as long as the 2030 Agenda remains our North Star.

4. With the reforms that we have made together, the United Nations development system is now better positioned to support Member States in the most ambitious global development endeavour to date. The COVID-19 response from the United Nations development system confirmed that the United Nations was primed for this shift. The reinvigorated resident coordinator system and the new generation of United Nations country teams leveraged assets from across the United Nations system to provide effective and immediate support to countries across the globe and to address the widespread impacts on people's lives, especially of women and young people. United Nations country teams deployed 121 socioeconomic response plans in 139 countries. Our response helped to ensure access to vaccination for millions of people, to health care, including maternal health services and nutrition, and to education for millions of children, assisted countries in their response to the surge in gender-based violence and protected people's access to social protection. Socioeconomic response plans are now folded into countries' Cooperation Frameworks to ensure that the recovery builds on countries' emergency responses towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Strengthening the United Nations development system to support countries in achieving their sustainable development objectives was at the core of the call from Member States in the 2020 quadrennial review. Member States provided clear guidance for the United Nations development system, requesting stronger action on poverty eradication, quality education, universal health coverage and expansion of social protection, as well as support for the urgent and equitable roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, which are critical to global economic recovery. Member States also asked

for strengthened rights-based and gender-responsive approaches in the work of the United Nations system for further improvements in gender equality, disability inclusion and United Nations action with and by youth, and increased investment in data support and capacity to target development investments to leave no one behind and better measure progress against stronger baselines and targets. States requested that entities lift support for climate action, energy transition, digital transformation and the conservation of biodiversity to the next level, in order to accelerate the shift towards inclusive, sustainable and resilient economies. They called for more tailored support to countries in special situations and those experiencing conflict or fragility and enhanced support for countries to mobilize the means of implementation.

6. The review of the resident coordinator system in 2021 was unequivocally in support of the United Nations development system reform process. Member States made a clear call for full adherence to the dual reporting model and full implementation of the Funding Compact as essential to deriving full benefit from the repositioned United Nations development system. The States agreed that the resident coordinator system needed to be fully funded and its core capacities preserved to deliver on the ambition of the reform, and they committed to making the current funding arrangements work to generate sufficient and predictable funding. They also set priorities for even more effective functioning of the resident coordinator system, namely mobility, recruitment and training of resident coordinators; efficiencies in business operations; and results-based reporting. This clear direction from Member States has given additional impetus to the reform.

7. For the first time, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched a survey for United Nations country teams, completed by 626 members across 30 United Nations development system entities; and extended the government survey to include voluntary contributors to the United Nations development system, receiving 68 responses, including from 14 of the top 20 contributors. Complementing the annual survey of programme country Governments, which was completed by 72 per cent of all programme country Governments, the survey of headquarters of United Nations development entities that, together, account for 92 per cent of all funding in operational activities for development, and the survey of resident coordinators, which was completed by 92 per cent of all resident coordinators, along with external assessments, the recent feedback provides evidence of an ever-growing level of satisfaction with the collective support of the United Nations development system. This is an important indication that the reform is delivering on Member States' intended objectives. However, the recent surveys also reveal areas that remain a work in progress. These, along with the additional mandates in the 2020 quadrennial review and the resident coordinator system review, provide levers for action in five key areas.

8. First, building on the results achieved by United Nations country teams in strengthening policy coherence and delivering integrated and expert support, we must ensure that the United Nations development system is fully equipped to support countries as they embark on just transitions in energy, food systems and digital connectivity. This means making more tangible progress in our joint commitment to aligning the Cooperation Frameworks with the Sustainable Development Goals and reconfiguring United Nations country teams to ensure that the necessary expertise and skill sets are in place to provide integrated responses to country needs and priorities and ensure progress across the Goals, leaving no one behind. It will require a step change in our efforts to bring expertise to countries at the right level.

9. Second, we must take full advantage of the convening role of the United Nations to help Governments to attract partnerships, know-how, financing, and development solutions at an unprecedented scale. The benefits of an empowered and more impartial development coordination function are clear in this regard. Across countries, resident

coordinators are convening in unprecedented ways. We must now take this to another level, with a strong sense of urgency.

10. Third, we must consolidate as a matter of urgency the outstanding elements of the reform. Four years into the reform, we must ensure excellence in and effectiveness of our business operations, ensuring that they enable expert, integrated support across the United Nations development system, and drive further efficiencies. Building on progress already achieved, our regional assets must deliver on the promise to provide real-time expertise and support to our resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. We must establish and make operational the new system-wide evaluation office to close the existing accountability gap on what the system does, together, to help countries to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. Fourth, we must continue our efforts to ensure that the reform of the United Nations development system brings about the changes in behaviour, culture and mindsets that can maximize the collective offer of the United Nations. The dual accountability model is an essential enabler for the United Nations development system to unite behind the Goals; its value and benefits are now well understood across the system. With the continued support and oversight of governing bodies, we must ensure that the revised management and accountability framework is fully implemented to drive whole-of-system support to countries, with each entity contributing according to its comparative advantage. The United Nations development system reform checklist being developed following Member States' request in the review of the resident coordinator system will be an important tool in that regard.

12. Fifth, we need a step change in our funding and business models. Fully delivering on commitments made in the funding compact to ensure quality and predictable funding is an indispensable first step in building the right incentives for the collective work and integration required to support Sustainable Development Goal implementation at scale. This starts with the funding, in full, of the resident coordinator system.

13. The findings in the present report paint an encouraging picture. They show the commitment of United Nations entities to putting the reforms to work to support the Sustainable Development Goals, with the continued guidance and backing of Member States at all levels. However, we must not be complacent as we consider the challenges ahead of us in the next year and beyond. This is the time to rescue the Goals; the lives of billions of people across the globe and the credibility of multilateralism depend on it. The Goals remain the world's best chance for a future of peace, dignity and prosperity.

14. My report on Our Common Agenda ([A/75/982](#)) offers a number of tools and ideas that could help to turbocharge the 2030 Agenda, with support from the United Nations development system. Member States can count on my absolute determination to continue to forge ahead, and I count on Member States' continued leadership.

II. A strengthened resident coordinator system for a step change in United Nations support to Sustainable Development Goal implementation

15. From the outset, the central goal of the repositioning of the United Nations development system was to move beyond incremental changes in the system's tools, architecture and skill sets to ensure far-reaching transformation in our support to countries' attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our common vision foresaw a path forward for the system to work collaboratively under robust and

impartial leadership, building on the strengths of each entity but moving away from the “lowest common denominator” that prevailed in the previous architecture. It also aimed to accelerate alignment with the Goals across all entities of the United Nations development system in a way that would be commensurate with the paradigm shift ushered in by the 2030 Agenda.

16. Four years into the reform, I can say with confidence that our reforms have gotten us much closer to our shared objectives. Feedback from surveys and external assessments continue to confirm that the resident coordinator system has advanced towards greater integration and collaboration. Resident coordinators are empowered to play their role as coordinators and conveners, enabled by Governments and United Nations country teams that recognize and support their leadership. United Nations country teams show greater signs of integration in their action, supported by better-quality common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks and improved working mechanisms to bring together skill sets and expertise from across the United Nations system, within or outside countries, to tailor the offer to countries’ unique needs and priorities. The reforms of the multi-country offices and at the regional level are bringing further support to countries for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. That progress was also reinforced by the initiatives, set in motion following the 2020 quadrennial review guidance and the 2021 review of the resident coordinator system, to enhance investments in training and build more appealing career paths for resident coordinators and development coordination officers; further improve the country configuration exercise; firmly anchor the regional reform; and strengthen the in-country implementation of the management and accountability framework.

18. That progress notwithstanding, however, we are not there yet. As countries are confronted with the compounded crises of climate, assaults on our natural systems, the protracted COVID-19 pandemic and most recently the war in Ukraine, we must continue to move forward with determination and ambition to ensure that we maximize the impact of the changes made. In particular, we must continue to invest in strengthening skill sets and strategically deploying the convening power of the United Nations to help countries to leverage financing, technologies and expertise and expand partnerships for development on an unprecedented scale. We must ensure that the enhancement of capacities of resident coordinator offices, new skill sets brought to United Nations country teams, and acute understanding of national budgets and fiscal space lead to a notable shift in our ability to render support across the 17 Goals, with economic transformation and sustainability at the centre. We must move faster to bring about more specific changes to our footprint in countries, aligned with country priorities as mandated by the General Assembly, and consolidate the regional reforms to bring to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams the expertise they need, when they need it, to support countries’ just transitions to more inclusive and sustainable economies.

19. Working hand in hand with Member States across all governing bodies, we must stay focused on ensuring both accountability and incentives system-wide, rather than “my agency first” culture, behaviour and siloed action. Only by working together can we provide sophisticated policy support to address the complex, multidimensional challenges that countries face and convene at the scale required to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. The resident coordinator, an empowered leader of the United Nations country team

20. At the core of the repositioning of the United Nations development system was the assumption that empowered, impartial and independent resident coordinators, as direct representatives of the Secretary-General in countries, could provide the leadership and impartiality required to drive greater integration within the United Nations country teams for Sustainable Development Goal support and acceleration. Similarly, we knew that only an independent development function relieved from programmatic and fundraising responsibilities could provide the United Nations with the independence, ability and legitimacy to convene all relevant stakeholders to support countries with the ambition and the scale necessary to achieve the Goals by 2030.

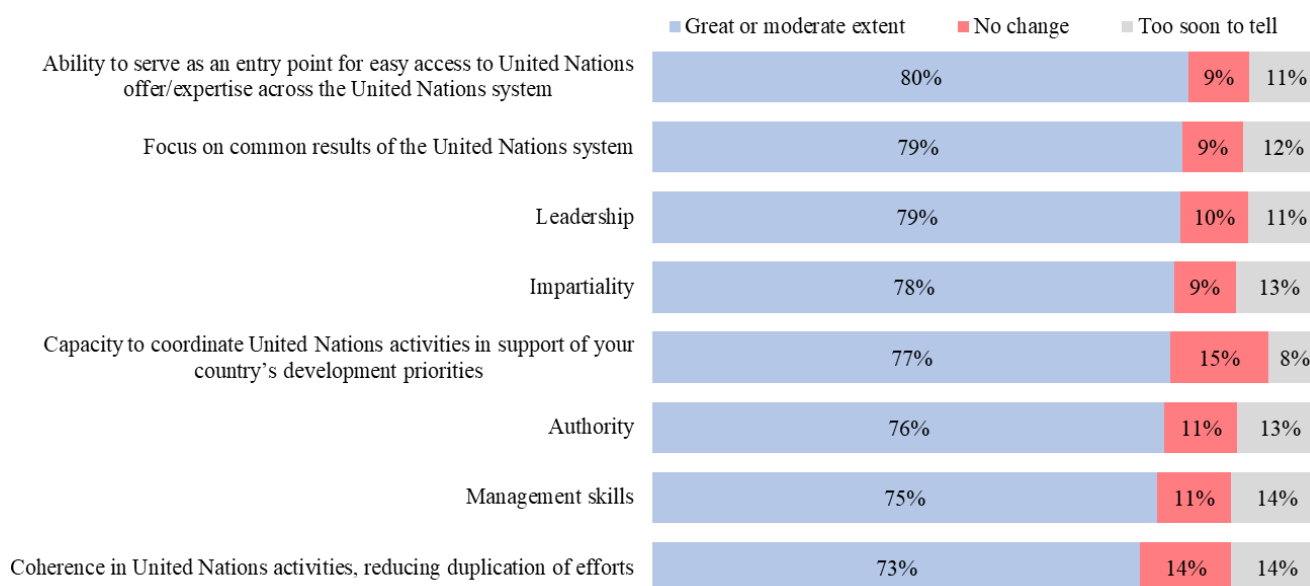
21. Together, we have come a long way. In its resolutions [72/279](#) and [75/233](#), the General Assembly endorsed my proposed way forward. It reiterated that empowered, strategic, effective and impartial leadership through the resident coordinator system was central to fostering more effective support from the United Nations development system. In 2021, Member States gave their unequivocal support to the direction taken in their review of the resident coordinator system, based on extensive feedback collected from surveys and internal and external assessments that the resident coordinator system was strengthening the United Nations collective offer in countries.

22. The report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office ([E/2022/54](#)) provides further details on the initiatives supported by the Office to further strengthen the leadership profiles and training of resident coordinators, aligned with Member States' request in the resolution on the review of the resident coordinator system. It also provides details on the initiatives taken to ensure that resident coordinator offices are at full capacity with five core Professional positions: the strategic planner and head of office; economist; data management and results reporting officer; partnership officer; and communications and advocacy officer.

23. The most recent data present convincing evidence that the resident coordinator system continued to deliver on its objectives. While areas of the reform remain a work in progress, there is universal consensus that the shift to a new resident coordinator system was both necessary and successful.

24. Government recognition of resident coordinators' leadership in delivering strategic support for national plans and priorities significantly increased from 79 per cent in 2019 to 89 per cent in 2021. For the third consecutive year, programme country Governments' perception of resident coordinators improved on several indicators, including in the resident coordinators' leadership, impartiality, focus on common results and role as an entry point for the offer of the United Nations (see figure 1).

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

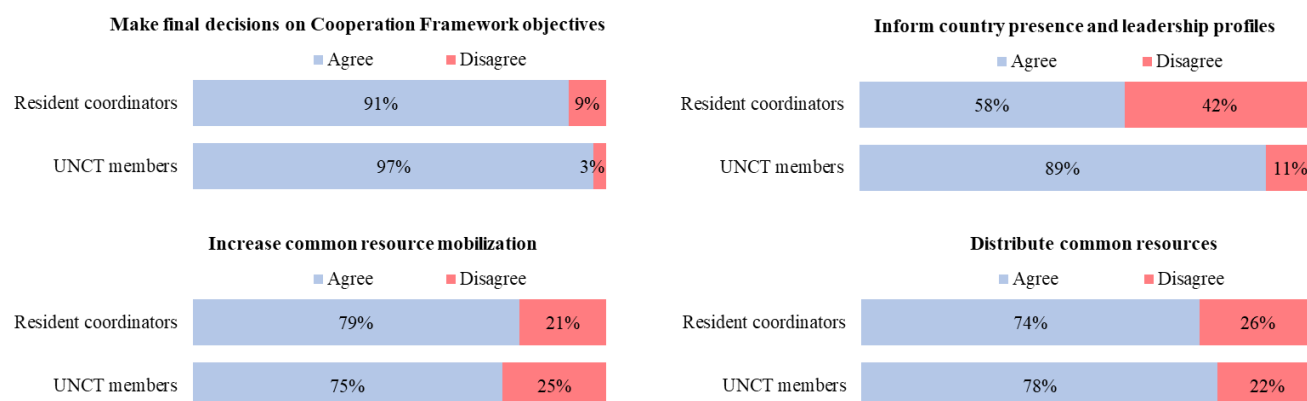


Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

25. A large majority of contributing countries and United Nations country teams, which were surveyed for the first time, recognized the value of the resident coordinator system. Three quarters of contributing countries agreed that the resident coordinators leveraged entities' comparative advantages, although less than half of them saw reduced duplication in activities of United Nations agencies, a somewhat expected finding, given that a transition is required before agencies can more radically revamp their ongoing portfolios. According to United Nations country team members, the resident coordinator is empowered effectively to make final decisions on strategic objectives of the Cooperation Framework (97 per cent), to inform country presence and leadership profiles (89 per cent) and to increase common resource mobilization (75 per cent) or distribute common resources (78 per cent) (see figure 2). These numbers correspond to the assessment of the resident coordinators themselves, except for differences in perception on country presence and leadership profiles (53 per cent).

Figure 2

Resident coordinators are considered empowered within the United Nations country team, but opinions differ on their ability to inform country presence and United Nations country team leadership profiles

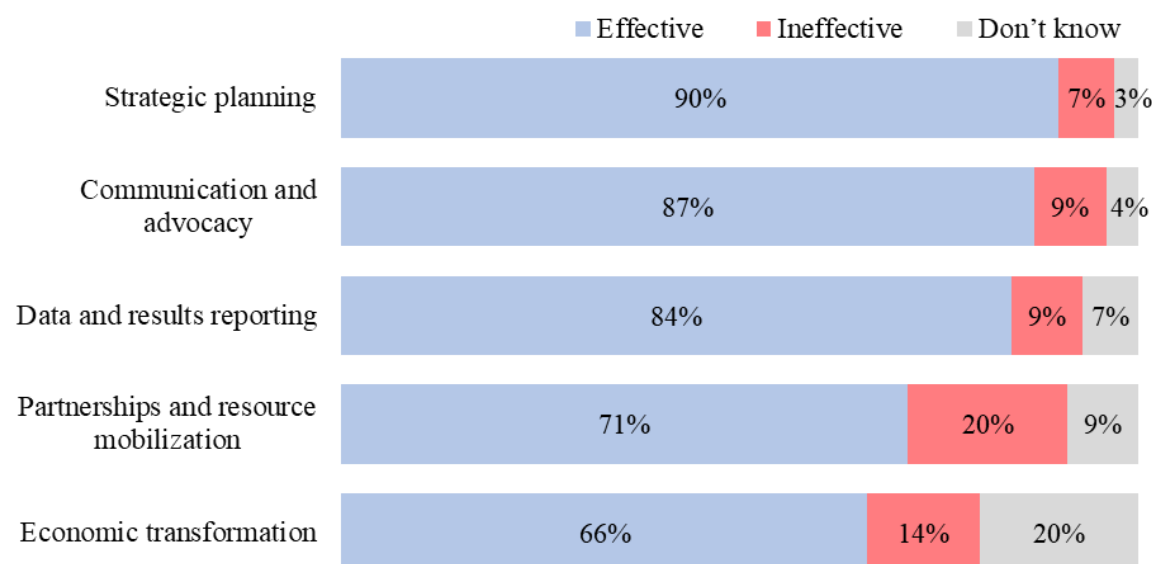


Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.
Abbreviation: UNCT, United Nations country team.

26. Similarly, United Nations country teams gave a high rating on the effectiveness of the support received from the resident coordinator office (see figure 3).

Figure 3

Resident coordinator office support to United Nations country teams



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of United Nations country teams.

B. United Nations country teams united for Sustainable Development Goal results

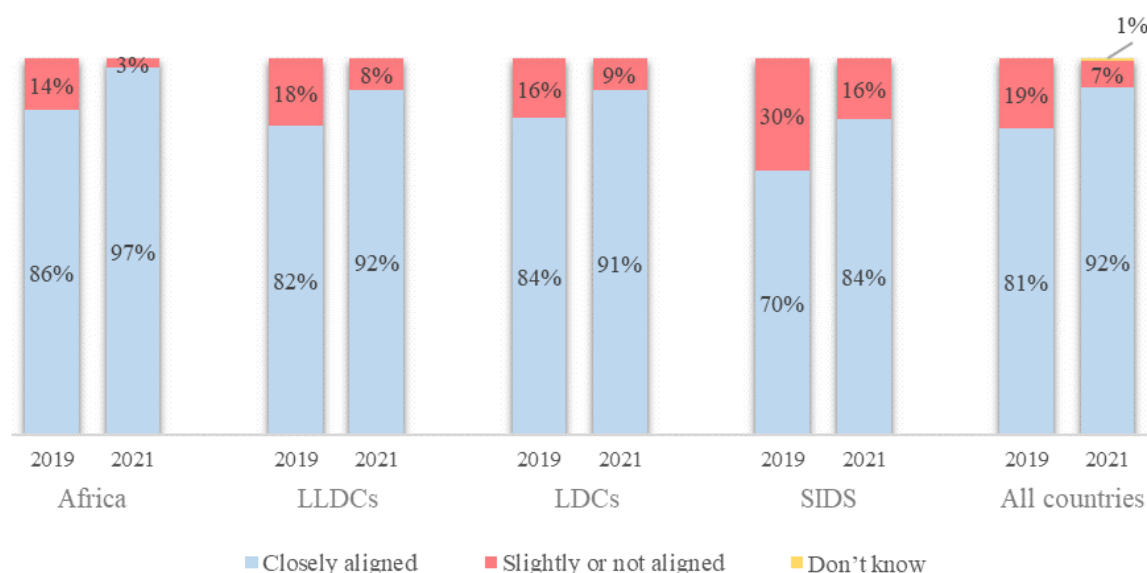
27. There is clear evidence that the new generation of United Nations country teams emerging as part of the reforms are working more collaboratively and according to a clearer division of labour, driving greater alignment with country needs and priorities.

28. Over 95 per cent of Governments agreed that the United Nations country team operates collaboratively, up from 80 per cent in 2019 and 93 per cent in 2020. Over two thirds of programme country Governments and 83 per cent of resident coordinators refer to a clearer division of labour within United Nations country teams.

29. Almost all programme countries state that United Nations development system efforts align with their national needs and priorities. In 2021, this reflected the views of 97 per cent of African countries, 91 per cent of the least developed countries, 92 per cent of landlocked developing countries and 84 per cent of small island developing States, a notable increase from 70 per cent the previous year (see figure 4).

Figure 4

Alignment of activities with national development needs and priorities



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

Abbreviations: LDCs, least developed countries; LLDCs, landlocked developing countries; SIDS, small island developing States.

30. Efforts made in 2021 to accelerate the roll-out of the Cooperation Frameworks and tailor the configuration of United Nations country teams to country needs and priorities have started to bear fruit, with Cooperation Frameworks increasingly being perceived as reflecting countries' priorities across all country categories.

31. The additional tools and guidance developed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, with the support of the Development Coordination Office, to improve the derivation of entity-specific country programme documents from Cooperation Frameworks and to better assess United Nations country team capacities will help to consolidate progress in these areas, with the support of governing bodies and host Governments.

United Nations country team support is more tailored to country needs and priorities

32. The surveys provide further insights on the key measures taken in the repositioning that have contributed the most to improving the United Nations country team offer, ranking the strengthened resident coordinator office, new Cooperation Frameworks and common country analyses as the most helpful in improving the offer of the United Nations (see figure 5). Notably, there is significant consistency in the views of resident coordinators and United Nations country team members.

Figure 5
Measures to improve the United Nations country team offer to countries

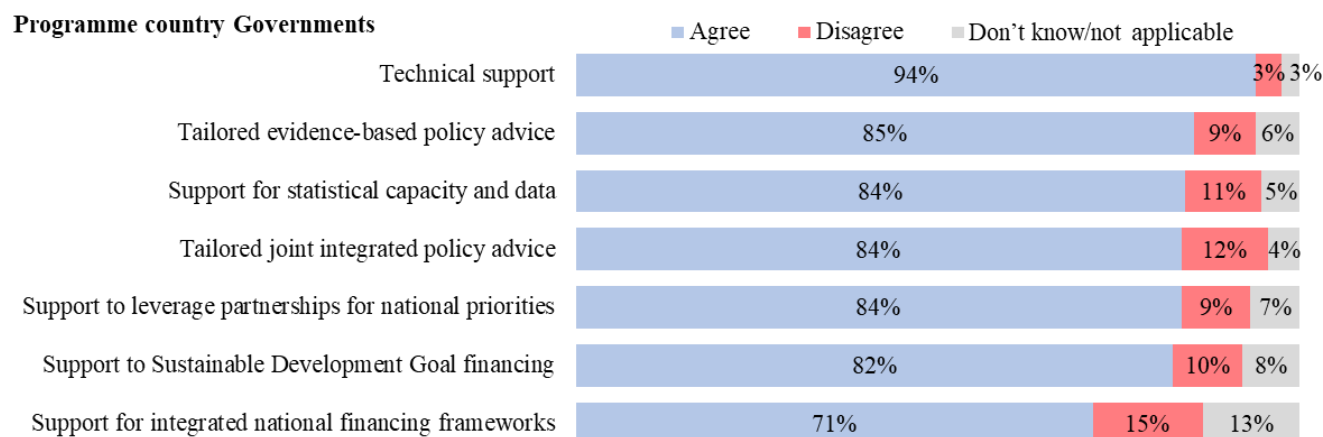
Measure	Resident coordinator responses				UNCT member responses			
	Great or moderate extent	Small extent	No change	Don't know	Great or moderate extent	Small extent	No change	Don't know
Strengthened RC office	90%	7%	3%	1%	70%	15%	9%	5%
Cooperation Framework	87%	6%	7%	1%	77%	10%	9%	3%
Common country analysis	85%	7%	7%	1%	77%	11%	8%	3%
Joint workplans	74%	12%	13%	1%	59%	21%	14%	5%
System-wide reporting	69%	23%	7%	2%	58%	22%	13%	6%
Results groups	65%	26%	9%	1%	63%	18%	14%	5%
Business operations strategy	61%	28%	11%	1%	55%	22%	13%	11%
More resources managed by RC/UNCTs	59%	18%	20%	3%	45%	25%	17%	14%
Strengthened MAF implementation	50%	29%	19%	3%	52%	22%	15%	12%
Strengthened MAF provisions	47%	32%	16%	4%	48%	24%	14%	14%
Resource mobilization transparency	45%	22%	31%	1%	45%	20%	24%	11%
Resource mobilization collaboration	45%	28%	25%	2%	44%	27%	23%	7%
Increased common premises	34%	33%	29%	3%	39%	20%	31%	10%

Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

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

33. Feedback received also confirms that the types of support provided by United Nations country teams have continued to become more relevant to countries' needs, with 66 per cent of programme countries finding the United Nations system to be more relevant to their needs since the repositioning. Over 94 per cent of Governments agreed that the United Nations provided adequate technical support, aligned to national needs (see figure 6). Over 84 per cent agreed that they received adequate support in tailored, joint integrated policy advice, statistical capacity and data collection and leveraging partnerships. Governments were least likely to agree that support was adequate for integrated national financing frameworks, at 71 per cent, although this represented a slight increase from the 2020 results.

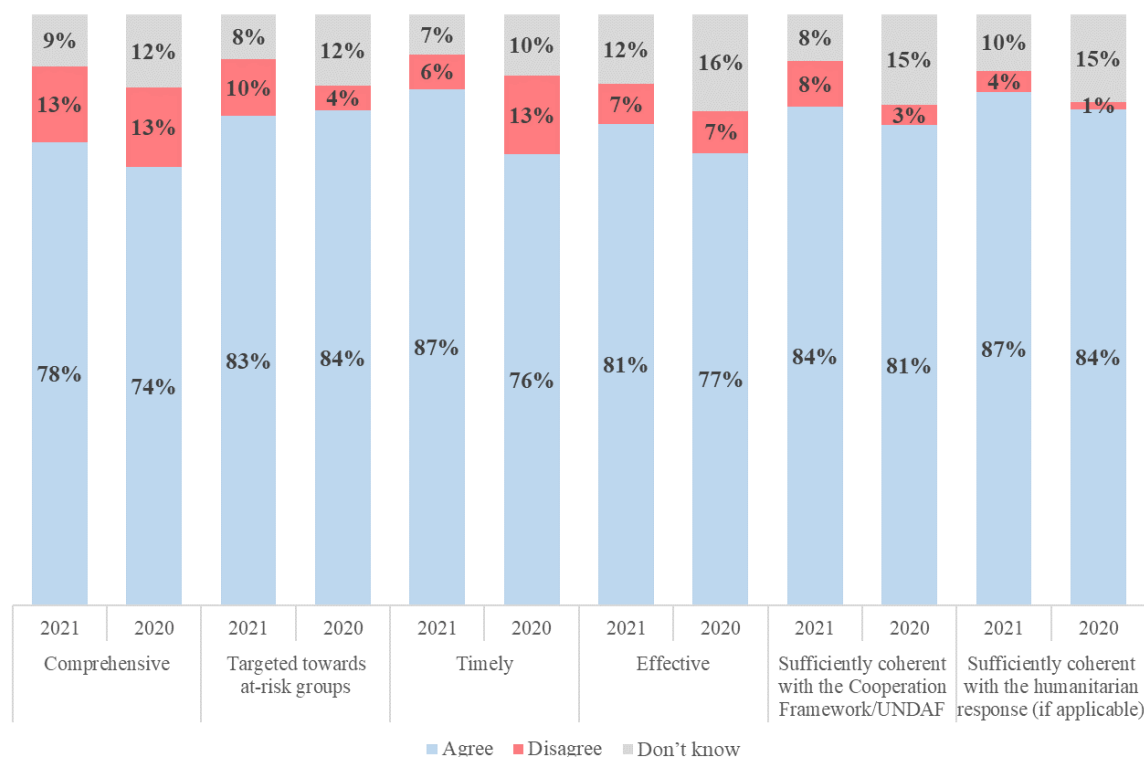
Figure 6
Programme country Governments agree that the United Nations provides adequate technical support and policy advice



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

34. Programme country Governments continued to rate the quality of the COVID-19 response highly and, overall, slightly more positively than in 2020 (see figure 7).

Figure 7
Quality of COVID-19 response



Source: 2020 and 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of programme country Governments.
Abbreviation: UNDAF, United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

35. Across the five pillars of the response of the United Nations development system to COVID-19, namely protecting health services and systems during the crisis, protecting people, protecting jobs, macroeconomic response and social cohesion (see figure 8), programme country Governments considered the planning and implementation to be even more effective than in 2020. The economic response and recovery pillar saw the most noticeable improvement, in which 85 per cent of programme country Governments expressed satisfaction with United Nations development system support to planning their respective responses in 2021, compared with 69 per cent in 2020.

Figure 8
Effectiveness of United Nations development system support across COVID-19 socioeconomic response plan pillars

	Response distribution, 2021 (percentage)			Trend in target (percentage)		Percentage change	
	Effective	Ineffective	Don't know	2020	2021	2020 → 2021	
Health first: protecting health services and systems during the crisis	Planning	95	1	4	87	95	▲ 8
	Implementation	93	0	7	84	93	▲ 9
Protecting people: social protection and basic services	Planning	91	3	6	83	91	▲ 8
	Implementation	86	4	10	81	86	▲ 5
Economic response and recovery: protecting jobs, SMEs, and informal sector workers	Planning	85	6	9	69	85	▲ 16
	Implementation	79	9	12	64	79	▲ 15
Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration	Planning	78	9	12	71	78	▲ 7
	Implementation	77	10	13	69	77	▲ 9
Social cohesion and community resilience	Planning	89	5	6	77	89	▲ 12
	Implementation	85	5	10	74	85	▲ 11

Source: 2020 and 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of programme country Governments.

Abbreviation: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises.

36. The report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office captures the key results achieved on the 18 socioeconomic response indicators developed to monitor the progress and achievements of United Nations country team collective actions to respond to and recover from the impacts of the pandemic. In addition, the interim report on the system-wide evaluation of the United Nations development system response to COVID-19, released in March 2022, highlights the positive effect of United Nations development system reforms in supporting collaborative and coherent planning by United Nations country teams in the COVID-19 context. It also shows how pooled financing mechanisms such as the COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund have been effective in driving entities further together in support of an integrated response.

37. Additional data received, including through the new surveys of United Nations country teams and contributing Governments, further confirm that the resident coordinator system is adding value to the work of United Nations country team members. This is important: to be self-sustained in the future, the resident coordinator system cannot simply “coordinate”; it must add value, which ensures that the United Nations development system becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

38. The feedback and data collected from resident coordinators and programme country Governments inform the management of the resident coordinator system and actions to consolidate the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The data shed light, in particular, on specific areas for further refinement, including the need to bring even greater coherence and avoid duplication within country teams, ensure that the resident coordinator is empowered to inform country presence and leadership profiles, and continue to improve skill sets in resident coordinator offices, and the United Nations country team as a whole, to support countries’ economic transformation, a priority for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Coherent and integrated common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks

39. The 2020 quadrennial review welcomed the revitalized Cooperation Frameworks as the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As set out in more detail in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office, we have made strides in the roll-out of new Cooperation Frameworks, ensuring that inclusive consultation processes lead to better-quality

Cooperation Frameworks, aligned with countries' priorities and needs for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

40. Implementation of an additional 31 Cooperation Frameworks started in 2021, bringing the total number of ongoing Cooperation Frameworks to 68, covering 52 per cent of United Nations country teams by the beginning of 2022. Another 26 Cooperation Frameworks will start the implementation process in 2022, with an additional 48 starting the design process in 2022. In 2023, the remaining 16 countries will initiate the design process, and by the end of 2023 all countries will have a new generation of Cooperation Frameworks. All 121 socioeconomic response plans, covering 139 countries, are now folded into the Cooperation Frameworks, to ensure alignment and inform a recovery that supports countries' just transitions towards more sustainable, inclusive economies. By the end of 2023, all countries will have transitioned from the former planning instrument (i.e. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks) to the new Cooperation Frameworks. Eighty per cent of United Nations country teams have now developed or updated their common country analyses to inform their Cooperation Frameworks.

41. To ensure that the Cooperation Frameworks are co-led with Governments and subsequently guided by them, over 80 per cent of resident coordinators have established with Governments joint steering committees that remain active throughout the Cooperation Framework's life cycle, with 72 per cent meeting once or more annually. This is an important step forward to ensure that we strengthen national leadership, alignment to national priorities and accountability in our development operations.

42. In this regard, I welcome the fact that almost all Governments (96 per cent) confirmed that United Nations activities in the Cooperation Framework are effectively responding to national priorities in the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals and that 82 per cent of Governments agreed that their engagement in the process is sufficient to ensure national ownership.

43. It is now time to move to the next phase in this effort and increase emphasis on ensuring that entities' programme documents truly derive from the Cooperation Framework. United Nations entities indicated in their recent responses that they have taken further action to align country programme documents with the Cooperation Frameworks. In addition, the Development Coordination Office has taken steps to facilitate and enhance transparency regarding alignment of country programme documents with Cooperation Frameworks, including by ensuring that a Cooperation Framework status dashboard is publicly available and provides real-time updates on the status of preparations. The dashboard can be used by governing bodies to inform their consideration of their respective entities' country programme documents.

44. However, we are still seeing a mixed picture in this regard, and accountability for implementation is inadequate. Only 28 per cent of United Nations country team members shared their country programme documents with the resident coordinator for review and confirmation by letter of their derivation from the Cooperation Framework. This will require significant change in the coming year to confirm alignment.

Tailored United Nations country team configuration

45. In my report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, issued in December 2017 ([A/72/684-E/2018/7](#)), I had proposed a demand-driven United Nations country team configuration model to optimize the mix of United Nations operational capacities and expertise from across the system, whether from resident or non-resident entities, and to best respond to country priorities. In General Assembly resolution [75/233](#) on the quadrennial review, Member States embraced this

idea and emphasized the need for the presence of the entities of the United Nations development system to be tailored according to specific needs of programme countries, to be finalized through open and inclusive dialogues with Governments as part of the discussions on the Cooperation Framework.

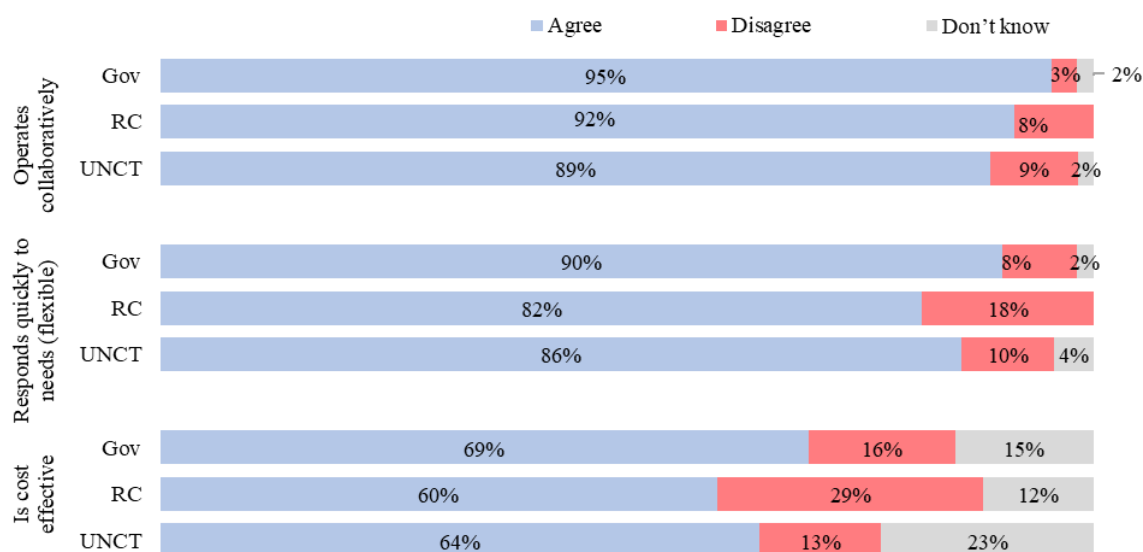
46. In my previous report ([A/76/75-E/2021/57](#)), I requested the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to develop a clearer and more transparent pathway to optimize country team capacities over the course of 2021 and 2022, including with host Governments.

47. By the end of 2021, 50 out of 68, or 73 per cent, of United Nations country teams that had designed a Cooperation Framework since 2019 had undertaken a configuration exercise. An overwhelming majority of programme country Governments (96 per cent) expressed satisfaction with the country team's engagement on configuration and presence through the dialogues on United Nations presence.

48. Country teams saw an intrinsic value in the configuration process itself, which allowed United Nations country teams to map synergies and complementarities, reconsider business models and foster more joined-up and integrated support. Governments mostly agreed (81 per cent) that the configuration exercise resulted in a United Nations country team that is adequately tailored to meet their specific needs and challenges, with variance between landlocked developing countries (92 per cent), the least developed countries (89 per cent) and small island developing States (61 per cent). In addition, Governments, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams broadly agree that the United Nations in-country presence operates collaboratively and is flexible and cost-effective (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Collaborative, flexible and cost-effective United Nations in-country presence and configuration



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

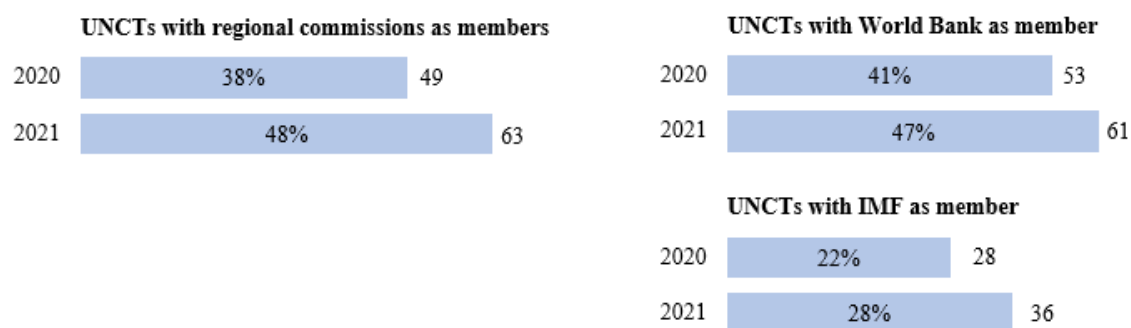
Note: Governments were asked about the United Nations in-country presence, while resident coordinators and United Nations country team members were asked about the current United Nations configuration, one component of which is entity presence.

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

49. As stated in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office, the inclusion of entities without a physical presence in United Nations country teams has created additional value for the countries. Entities such as the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, which have limited or no permanent presence in countries, have made important contributions to Cooperation Frameworks. UNCTAD expertise in tracking illicit financial flows benefited work in Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia. In Mozambique, UNIDO and UNCTAD contributed to the national development strategy to diversify the economy for sustainable livelihoods. Regional commissions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are increasingly joining United Nations country teams (see figure 10) and signing Cooperation Frameworks.

Figure 10

Percentage of United Nations country teams that have international financial institutions and/or regional commissions as members



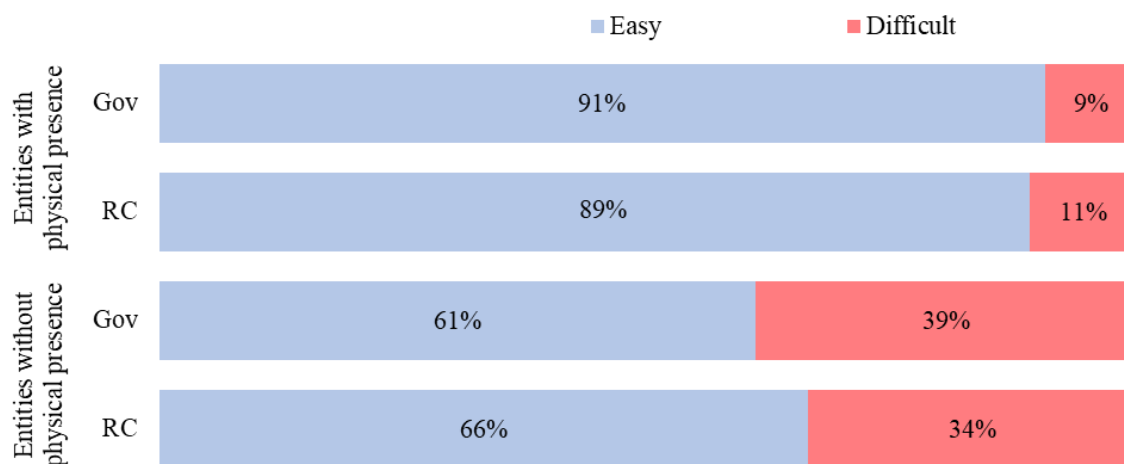
Source: United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system, 2021.

Abbreviations: IMF, International Monetary Fund; UNCTs, United Nations country teams.

50. While these are positive developments, I remain of the view that we can be more ambitious in our reconfiguration efforts and our review of United Nations country team skill sets to respond to changing demands on the ground. There are still clear missed opportunities to better deploy our assets in countries. In addition, 39 per cent of countries and 34 per cent of resident coordinators continue to report difficulties in gaining access to technical expertise from United Nations entities that are not physically present in the country (see figure 11). We are also seeing little progress in Governments' perception with regard to United Nations country teams becoming more cost-effective as a result of country configuration.

Figure 11

Governments' and resident coordinators' access to technical expertise from entities without a physical presence



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of programme country Governments and resident coordinators.

Abbreviations: Gov, Governments; RC, resident coordinators.

51. Supporting countries in getting back on track and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires the United Nations development system in countries to allocate its best skill sets and expertise, irrespective of physical presence. United Nations country teams will also need to adjust quickly so that they remain fit for purpose as they address new and emerging challenges and opportunities in countries. In 2022, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group will roll out a capacity assessment methodology to guide resident coordinators in adjusting the existing footprint on the basis of changing national needs and priorities. This will need to go hand in hand with stronger efforts to increase staff mobility and with engagement with host Governments, which have a key role to play in the full implementation of this priority in the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

Enhancing coordination across humanitarian, development and peace actions to advance the Sustainable Development Goals

52. Violence and conflict, coupled with a climate crisis and increasing and more intense natural disasters and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to wreak havoc. Even before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, some 274 million people were estimated to need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022, 17 per cent more than in 2021. Owing to the direct impacts of the conflict in Europe, as well as its global impacts on developing countries through instability in international financial, energy and food markets, the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance and protection has risen to 296 million. In addition, in the 107 countries severely exposed to at least one of the three dimensions of this shock – food, energy, finance – home to 1.7 billion people, 55.3 million are already in poverty and 215 million already undernourished. In this regard, in March 2022 I established the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to coordinate the global response to the worldwide impacts of the war in Ukraine on global food, energy and finance systems. The Group published its first policy brief on the global effect of the war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems, outlining a series of recommendations to mitigate the effects of the crisis.

53. It is clear that the 2030 Agenda can be achieved universally only if we significantly alter the way in which United Nations entities collaborate in difficult contexts where humanitarian, development and peace challenges intersect. The 2020 quadrennial review is clear in this regard. This is not about blurring mandates or resources but about ensuring that assets across United Nations pillars are deployed in coherent ways to help countries to remain on the path – or get back on track – to advance sustainable development. In other words, more integrated action across pillars is essential if we are to be more effective in preventing conflict, crises and vulnerabilities before it is too late and in accelerating transitions out of conflict and crises when they hit.

54. We have a good foundation on which to build, thanks to efforts already made and to the complementary reforms of the United Nations development system, peace architecture and management. Some 84 per cent of programme country Governments now see close United Nations collaboration across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding action. Some 83 per cent and 89 per cent of United Nations country team members and resident coordinators, respectively, described close collaboration among entities working on development and humanitarian activities. The fact that 75 per cent of United Nations country team members and 76 per cent of resident coordinators reported close collaboration between humanitarian and peacebuilding actors shows that there is room for improvement.

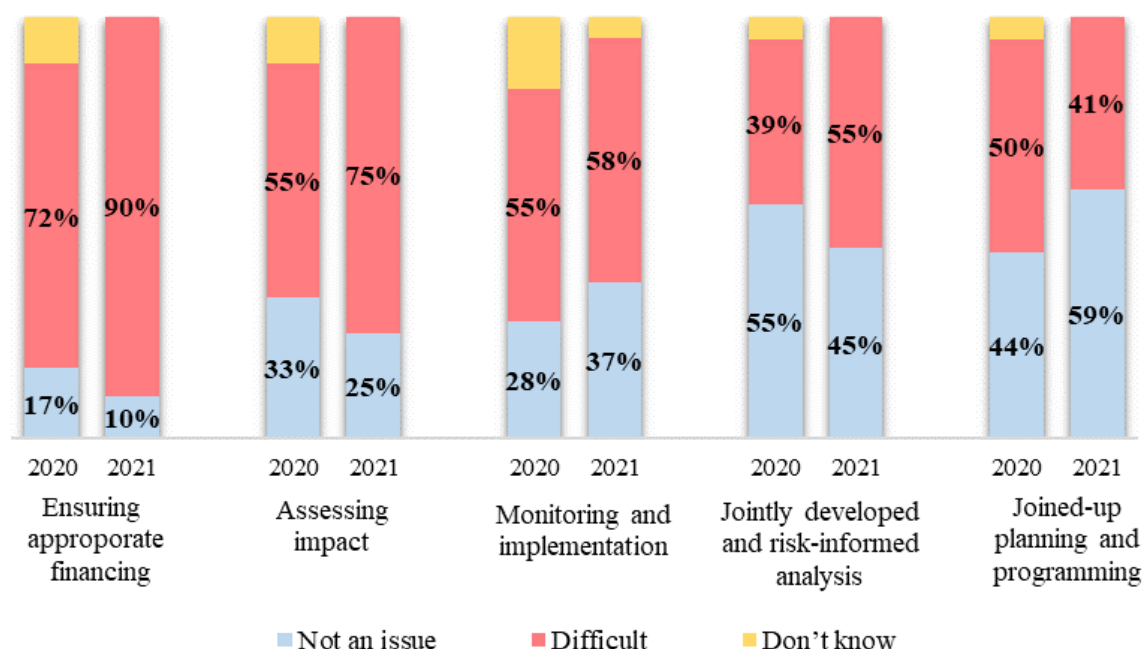
55. However, only 77 per cent of programme country Governments agreed that resident coordinators contributed to building stronger synergies across humanitarian, development and peace interventions, a decrease from the 88 per cent reported in 2020. Dedicated expertise and surge capacity to support resident coordinator offices, particularly peace and development advisers, disaster risk and reduction advisers and dedicated support to strengthen coordination across programmes, was identified by headquarters entity respondents as instrumental in fostering joint analysis, planning and programming. Respondents from headquarters entities identified the lack of data-sharing and data interoperability among United Nations entities as another significant challenge. Ultimately, it is widely recognized that deeper culture and behaviour change across United Nations management and staff will be required for stronger collaboration and genuine recognition by all actors across all pillars of the unique value of development as both the root cause of and solution to crises.

56. I have asked my Special Adviser on Strengthening Programmatic Integration to work closely with entities across all pillars to identify ways to accelerate progress, drawing on the data collected, especially in areas where feedback is below expectations. We are also undertaking an internal review of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration to identify new opportunities to usher in a step change in the collaboration between humanitarian and development activities. In the meantime, and in line with the mandate of the 2020 quadrennial review, the work of the Joint Steering Committee is being disseminated regularly to Member States, with the most recent briefing held on 30 November 2021.

57. Successfully bridging silos where the country context requires it, and scaling up collaboration between pillars, call for different engagement and new incentives by Member States and funding partners. With the funding compact in place, it is particularly concerning that predictable, flexible and multi-year funding continues to be perceived as a significant challenge by 90 per cent of survey respondents within the United Nations system, up from 72 per cent in 2020 (see figure 12). Administrative impediments, including budgets tied to specific projects, as well as donors preventing the pooling of humanitarian and development funding, were seen as perpetuating a fragmented approach.

Figure 12
Ongoing work to bridge humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities

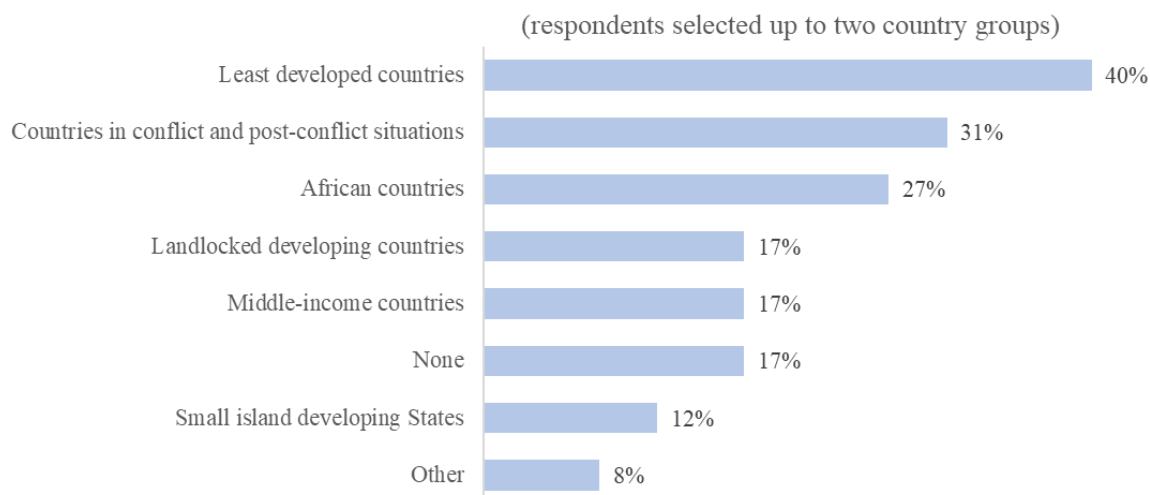
Question: please assess the level of difficulties with each of the following aspects:



Source: 2020 and 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of United Nations development system entity headquarters.

58. A flexible funding mechanism that could target activities in areas where development, humanitarian and peace intersect could enable enormous progress. Regrettably, only 29 per cent of contributing Governments reported plans to increase funding through United Nations inter-agency pooled funds by 2023, and only 29 per cent indicated more support for joint programmes, even though countries in conflict and post-conflict situations are generally well prioritized by contributing Governments in deciding funding for the United Nations development system (see figure 13).

Figure 13
Country groups that contributing countries prioritize the most when making funding decisions



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of contributing Governments.

59. In the United Nations system, steps are being taken to maximize the coherence, and therefore impact, across existing pooled funds, including the Peacebuilding Fund, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund. While these funds will preserve their separate governance and programmatic focus, there is significant scope to improve the coordination of funding allocation to improve overall effectiveness on the ground and contribute to a longer-term effort to introduce more flexible pooled funding mechanisms.

60. Ensuring that the governance arrangements across pillars are more coherent and conducive to collaboration remains critical. The reconfigured meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the transition from relief to development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/290 A](#), offers opportunities to ensure that countries affected by conflict and those facing humanitarian emergencies are supported in an integrated manner, and with the overall objective of improving their sustainable development outcomes. I am also encouraged by the prospects of continued collaboration between the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, including through joint meetings in support of country-specific and thematic dialogues. This is an area of great potential that lies in the hands of Member States.

Multi-country offices for tailored support

61. Throughout 2021, the resident coordinator system and various United Nations development system entities took further steps to operationalize the recommendations to strengthen the offer of the United Nations to countries and territories served by multi-country offices. The unique challenges and vulnerabilities of these countries and territories, largely small island developing States in the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, have been made all too clear once again in the past year, with huge setbacks to economic growth as a result of loss of tourism and closed borders during the pandemic, the worsening impact of climate change, and now the war in Ukraine. Most such States are net food and fuel importers and are highly indebted, and therefore are among developing countries with the most severe exposure to the triple food, energy and finance shock from the war.

Strengthening in-country presence

62. It gives me great satisfaction to see that our commitment to strengthening the ability of the United Nations development system to support countries through multi-country offices is now a reality. With tenacity and by working together with Member States, in particular small island developing States, we have moved from resolutions to results.

63. A new United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean (2022–2026) is beginning implementation in 22 countries and territories, and a new Pacific Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) is in development. This multi-country approach has maintained national relevance to all targeted countries and territories, while drawing on commonalities among countries of focus.

64. As an outcome of the multi-country office review, in October 2021 the Development Coordination Office established a new resident coordinator office and United Nations country team for Micronesia, covering Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru and Palau. Early feedback from national Governments has been very positive, and expectations for the office remain high. Country coordination officers are now in place in each country covered by a multi-country office in the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean regions, and regional coordination specialists for the Pacific and the Caribbean were also deployed to strengthen coordination with regional and subregional institutions.

65. Under the new Caribbean Cooperation Framework, entities such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNCTAD and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme have committed larger programmatic engagements and/or new physical presence in the eastern Caribbean. Three new joint United Nations offices shared by several entities are to be opened in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2022. In the Pacific, the United Nations programmatic footprint has also increased significantly, from a total of \$70 million and 880 staff in 2018 to a high value of \$237 million in 2021 country implementation plans, delivered by 1,106 staff.

66. The initial steps of the revamped multi-country offices give cause for optimism. Over the past year, the United Nations system has leveraged the new multi-country office capacities to provide support to small island developing States in their COVID-19 response. The United Nations system in the Pacific reprogrammed around 46 per cent of planned United Nations interventions to support countries affected by COVID-19. In the eastern Caribbean, the United Nations multisectoral response plan raised over \$45 million and, following initial success, was extended until 2021 to allow further repurposing of United Nations support and technical assistance on emerging priorities, including expanded coverage on social protection, financing and partnerships.

67. In addition, the leadership of resident coordinators along with dedicated resource mobilization specialists in resident coordinator offices have helped to significantly increase the levels of pooled funding available to small island developing States since 2019. The United Nations in the Pacific has accessed a combination of development, humanitarian and COVID-19 funding worth more than \$55 million by the first quarter of 2022 from development partners, allowing more integrated joint programming through key agencies and unlocking the potential to leverage additional financing from public and private investment. The number of United Nations joint programmes in the Pacific has increased ninefold since the start of the reform, from 8 in 2019 to 75 in 2021.

68. The Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund prioritized small island developing States in its initial allocations in 2020 and 2021, providing a total of \$28.6 million to 19 countries and territories, with a specific focus on social protection and Sustainable Development Goal financing. In addition, in June 2021 a dedicated call for proposals for small island developing States led to the mobilization of an additional \$30 million to strengthen resilience through innovative and catalytic investments. These projects will involve 23 different United Nations entities at both the country and regional levels and will leverage an additional \$17.8 million from the development system for integrated policies and financing for the Goals.

69. It is particularly encouraging to see efforts by various United Nations entities to step up their support to small island developing States as part of the multi-country office review commitments. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative “Rising up for SIDS”, for example, focuses on rapid response with technical and policy support in the areas of climate action, the blue economy, digital transformation and financing. The International Trade Centre is currently consulting partners in the Caribbean and the Pacific on a strategy for small island developing States that will address economic diversification; strengthening the capacity of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to overcome limitations related to remoteness, scale and vulnerability; promoting digital, e-commerce and intellectual property infrastructure; and supporting the climate resilience of enterprises. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime initiated a number of initiatives in 2021, working closely with regional intergovernmental entities such as the Caribbean Community, to combat corruption and transnational organized crime, including drugs, firearms and trafficking in persons at ports of entry, as well as at sea. It has also worked with the Indian Ocean Commission and its member States to develop a regional action plan for the protection and resilience of submarine cables in the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. In Belize, the resident coordinator office and UNDP partnered to provide the host Government with a Sustainable Development Goals investor map, aimed at facilitating and attracting private development financing in 16 investment opportunity areas of national priority. In the Pacific, the United Nations country team has launched a “blue financing” signature initiative as part of the Fiji coral reefs joint programme, bringing in \$10 million from the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, with the intent to raise an additional \$50 million from private and public investment in blended finance.

70. I am encouraged by the progress in strengthening the support of the United Nations to all small island developing States, irrespective of whether they have a stand-alone or a multi-country resident coordinator office, as also reflected in the improved perception of small island developing States of the alignment of United Nations country team activities with national development needs and priorities, from 70 per cent to 84 per cent.

71. This is, however, only the beginning of what we hope will mark a new era in United Nations collaboration with small island developing States. Moving forward, additional attention will be paid to maximizing the impact of the United Nations support on the ground as unique financial, debt-, transport- and climate-related challenges continue to distress such States and to supporting recovery from the severe exposure of those States to the intersecting impact of climate change, COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.

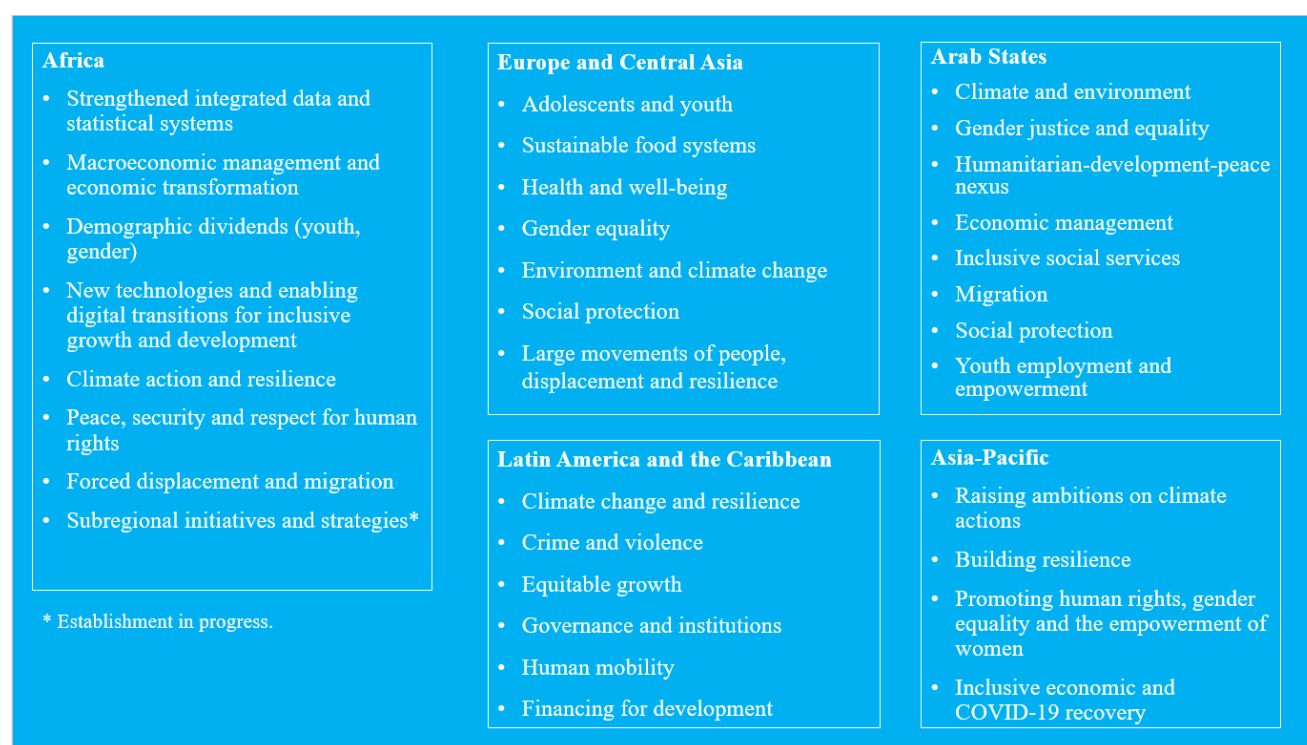
C. Bringing together regional assets in support of country needs

72. Regional collaborative platforms are now fully established in all regions, providing a robust foundation for improved regional support to countries, based on

country demand. This has been a priority focus of each of the five annual meetings of the regional collaborative platforms chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General in March and April 2022.

73. Regional issue-based coalitions are one of the main vehicles of the substantive work that regional collaborative platforms can offer to country teams, rallying United Nations system-wide expertise in an agile manner in response to changing regional and country needs. The five regions undertook an assessment of the offer provided by their issue-based coalitions in 2021, leading to changes in focus and functioning (see figure 14). For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, an issue-based coalition on financing for development was established in 2021 in direct response to a request from resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. In Africa, at a consultation of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, data, climate action, macroeconomic frameworks and digital transformation were identified as priority areas for support from the opportunity/issue-based coalitions. Further efforts will be required in 2022 to strengthen dialogue between the regional and country levels and ensure that issue-based coalitions fulfil their role in providing agile and responsive integrated support to priorities in the region.

Figure 14
Current issue-based coalitions, by region



74. Another important area of priority of the regional review was to provide resident coordinators on-demand access to experts in the region for timely support of countries' needs and priorities for Sustainable Development Goal implementation, through a roster of expertise or communities of practice. The mapping of regional assets, conducted by the think tank Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional in 2019 to inform the regional review, gives an indication of the breadth of available expertise in the region.

75. Knowledge management hubs in each region and through which expertise and experience can be mobilized in a timely manner for identified needs are important building blocks. Steps have also been taken to bring coherence to the data architecture for evidence-based planning, programming, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Africa United Nations Data for Development Platform was launched in 2021 as a regional repository of high-quality data on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and a United Nations-Africa data and statistics strategy was completed. Similarly, the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia continued to support United Nations country teams in 2021 and has enlarged its membership to key non-United Nations entities active in data and statistics, thereby becoming more integrated into the global statistics community. In the Arab States, the Manara platform was launched in early 2022 and includes an intelligent search engine, tools for surveys, data analysis, visualization and simulations, among other features.

76. In all regions, regional operations management teams have been established to develop and implement regional business operations strategies to support the implementation of efficiency initiatives in the regions. A strategy is now in place in the Arab States region, while work is ongoing in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The reports published by all regions on results achieved under the umbrella of regional collaborative platforms in 2021 illustrate the collective achievements and joint system-wide efforts at the regional level that contributed to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal acceleration, along with specific regional development initiatives, goals and priorities. I encourage Member States to review each of the reports and provide guidance and feedback on the work and focus of the respective platforms.

Overview of integrated support in each region

77. In 2021, the Regional Collaborative Platform in Africa supported implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area to deepen regional integration and foster intra-African trade to accelerate Sustainable Development Goal implementation. Technical support was further provided to Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria and Togo to develop COVID-19 response plans, mobilize human and financial resources to support implementation, and monitor the progress of the response plans in the finance, tourism and transport sectors. The opportunity/issue-based coalitions on climate action and resilience, as they are known in Africa, pooled regional assets to provide joint support to the African Union Commission to establish a continental multi-hazard early warning system. Climate action will continue to be a priority for the Regional Collaborative Platform in Africa in 2022 to leverage regional assets in the preparations for the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt.

78. In the Arab States, the Regional Collaborative Platform provided support in the adoption of a ministerial declaration with key guiding principles for post-COVID-19 social protection and for the regional review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with Member States. The Regional Collaborative Platform further supported nine countries in their preparations for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, including analysis of national context and progress.

79. In Asia and the Pacific, the issue-based coalition on climate change mitigation supported United Nations country teams and Governments in raising the level of ambition of their nationally determined contributions in the lead-up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Northern Ireland. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams were supported in formulating Cooperation Frameworks that are more risk-informed, gender-responsive and human rights-centred, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Maldives, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Regional Collaborative Platform also played a facilitation role between the global and national levels on issues such as sustainable food systems and financing for development.

80. In Europe and Central Asia, the issue-based coalition on environment and climate change equipped resident coordinators and United Nations country teams with a compendium of measures for green post-pandemic recovery to support Member States in “greening” recovery plans. The issue-based coalition on sustainable food systems provided technical support to United Nations country teams in their preparations for the Food Systems Summit. It also launched a regional community of practice on the sustainability of food systems to provide key stakeholders with an inclusive and open digital space in which to share ideas, practices and knowledge on regional policy areas related to food systems.

81. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean supported resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in formulating Cooperation Frameworks that are more risk-informed and transformative, including the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean (2022–2026), which covers 22 countries and territories, as well as Cooperation Frameworks for El Salvador, Honduras and Peru. In response to a request for support from the resident coordinators of Central America, Colombia and Mexico on the challenges posed by increased human mobility flows and related protection challenges in their region, the issue-based coalition on human mobility deployed system-wide expertise to facilitate a coordinated response across affected countries in the region.

82. The regional review has been one of the most complex endeavours in these reforms. Working together with Member States and regional offices of the United Nations across all regions, we have made unprecedented progress. In 2021, I was pleased to see the regional assets working more collaboratively and cohesively in support of countries’ needs and priorities, using the experience, knowledge and expertise of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to guide their support. However, while we sense genuine excitement in the regions as they enter a new era of collaboration, the litmus test for these reforms continues to be whether we are achieving transformative impact in countries.

83. At this early stage of the regional reforms, with only 54 per cent of programme country Governments indicating that expertise from the regional offices of United Nations development system entities was easy to access, it is clear that we still have a significant way to go to fully deliver on our ambition.¹ The success of the new regional architecture depends on our ability to respond, in real time, to the demands emerging from the country level and on our actions demonstrating impact on the ground. This requires further efforts in all regions to ensure that experts and expertise can be leveraged for timely integrated policy advice, within the region and beyond, on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An updated mapping of expertise available at the regional level, and operationalizing systems to make the expertise easily accessible, will be a priority in 2022. In addition, and to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are mobilized in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, the regional collaborative platforms will also need to put in place more systematic

¹ Specifically, 54 per cent of programme Governments that responded found access to be easy, and 19 per cent difficult; 27 per cent of respondents indicated “Don’t know/not applicable”.

outreach to external partners, including regional entities, development finance institutions, the private sector, think tanks and academia.

84. To accelerate progress against these priorities, we have asked for an independent stocktaking and recommendations from the think tank Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional, which has accompanied the regional review process, as we continue to roll out our ambitious objectives for the regions. For too long, regional entities of the United Nations were left outside of reforms and efforts to enhance the coherence of the United Nations development system. In many instances, the work at the regional level has also resided outside of system-wide reporting efforts, leading to an accountability gap or turning success stories largely invisible. We are in the process of changing this reality, with more impact and transparency in the way in which we deploy our regional assets.

III. Scaled-up, integrated response to countries' sustainable development needs and priorities

85. The world is moving backwards on most of the Sustainable Development Goals, with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine supercharging a three-dimensional crisis – food, energy and finance – that is pummeling some of the world's most vulnerable people, countries and economies. All this comes at a time when developing countries are already struggling with a slate of challenges not of their making: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and a lack of access to adequate resources to finance the recovery in the midst of persistent and growing inequalities. We are facing a perfect storm that threatens to devastate the economies of many developing countries in the absence of urgent action.

86. We need to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and get back on track in our road towards 2030. The current simultaneous crises we face must be approached as an opportunity to push for the transformational change that our world needs. This means embarking on just transitions in energy, digital connectivity and food systems, which, taken together, can have multiplying effects across the 2030 Agenda. For this, we need to pull developing countries back from the financial brink, opening access to the funding available in the international financial system to the economies that need them most so that Governments can avoid default, provide social safety nets for the poorest and most vulnerable, and continue to make critical investments in sustainable development. To live up to the promise to leave no one behind, we need to put people at the centre, offering the same rights and opportunities to all.

87. These imperatives are at the heart of the 2020 quadrennial review. It called, precisely, for support for recovery efforts that can accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It requested the United Nations development system to focus on crucial investments in education, health, social protection and decent work; in climate action, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the energy transition; in advancing gender equality and tackling discrimination in all its forms; and in leveraging the power of digital transformation. Member States also reinforced the need for enhanced and tailored support to countries to mobilize the means of implementation, in particular financing for development.

88. Against significant headwinds, there is no doubt that the results achieved with support from the United Nations development system last year have contributed to advances in Sustainable Development Goal implementation. A total of 133 million children in 95 countries were reached with cash transfer programmes; 19.9 million people gained access to basic sanitation services; 138 million workers globally were protected with reduced risk of work-related death, injuries and disease; and 48.7

million out-of-school children, 50 per cent of them girls, gained access to education. These results, and many more, are elaborated on in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. They give reason to hope that there is fertile ground for progress. They demonstrate that the foundations are now securely in place and the United Nations development system has risen to the challenge of more integrated, expert support to country needs and priorities on sustainable development.

89. As we look ahead, it will be vital to double down on advocacy and outreach aimed at mobilizing political ambition, breakthroughs and commitments from the international community to end the pandemic, reverse deteriorating Sustainable Development Goal trends, secure decisive climate action and reform the international financial system.

90. To help to turbocharge implementation, it is essential to address with urgency some of the shortcomings in our response that the recent surveys have helped to identify. This includes completing the current trajectory towards more collaborative behaviour and business models across every entity of the United Nations development system; improving planning and programming tools to support truly integrated programmes; and scaling up ambition, knowledge and expertise on the priority areas identified in the 2020 quadrennial review to support countries' just transitions towards a sustainable, inclusive and equitable future. In doing so, resident coordinators must use their convening role to bring every expert on board to deliver at scale.

91. The proposals I made in Our Common Agenda are meant to provide additional levers to turbocharge action in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. I have requested the Deputy Secretary-General to continue to work with the principals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to strengthen our collective offer for the Sustainable Development Goals, leveraging Our Common Agenda to drive results at scale.

A. Towards integrated support for global economic recovery and to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals

Driving further integration of United Nations support

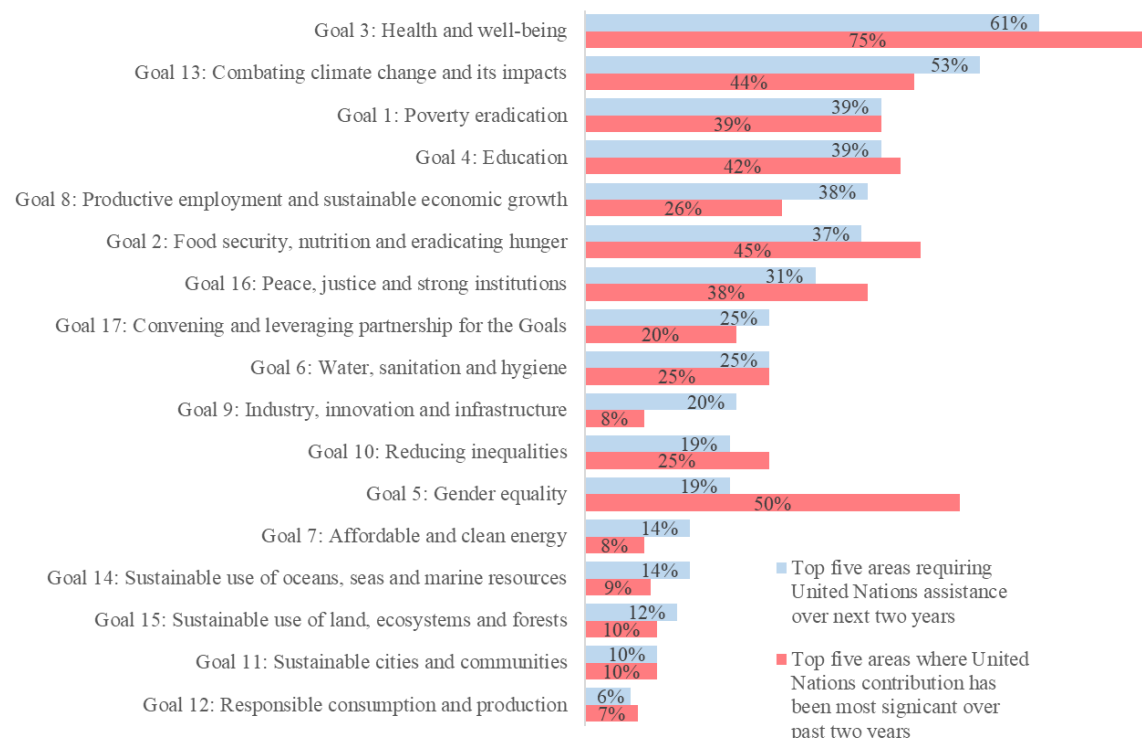
92. In 2021, the United Nations development system response to COVID-19 provided clear evidence of the value that host Governments place in the provision of evidence-based, integrated policy advice and technical support. The comprehensive health, humanitarian and socioeconomic responses to countries ensured a focus on immediate needs while striving to protect hard-won development gains. For example, 1.4 billion vaccine doses were delivered in 144 countries, with an additional 2.8 billion doses secured or received as donations. Early findings from the system-wide evaluation of the United Nations development system response to COVID-19 confirm a clear linkage between the reform and programmatic coherence, noting the effective way in which United Nations entities were able to quickly adapt, repurpose funds and resources, mobilize new funding, and transform challenges into opportunities. As the world slowly moved beyond the immediate recovery stage, all socioeconomic response plans were folded into the Cooperation Frameworks to ensure that future activities build on the immediate emergency response and strengthen the groundwork for countries' just transitions towards more sustainable, inclusive economies.

93. Taking stock of the United Nations development system response, Governments reported that the United Nations contribution to national efforts in the past two years had been most impactful in health and well-being (Sustainable Development Goal 3), an evident impact of the COVID-19 response (see figure 15). This was followed by

gender equality (Goal 5), food security (Goal 4), climate change (Goal 13), education (Goal 4) and poverty eradication (Goal 1). With the pandemic entering its third year, health and well-being (Goal 3) continues to be the area in which most Governments (61 per cent) request United Nations development system support for the next two years, albeit significantly less than in 2020 (75 per cent). Climate action (Goal 13) has climbed up the list of priorities.

Figure 15

Past and future United Nations assistance and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

94. The 2020 quadrennial review also highlighted the need for the United Nations development system to leverage the entities' unique contributions and add value, and to provide high-quality, integrated policy advice and support with a stronger focus on actions, results, coherence, progress and impact.

95. The resulting shift in approach is recognized by programme countries. In 2021, 94 per cent of programme country Governments agreed that the Cooperation Frameworks define pathways to maximize synergies across Sustainable Development Goals, and 86 per cent agreed that the United Nations delivers joint integrated policy advice tailored to national needs and priorities.

96. The unique value of the United Nations development system support in countries is also being recognized. A total of 70 per cent choose the United Nations as one of their preferred development partners for evidence-based policy advice and 63 per cent for integrated policy advice, far ahead of other multilateral and regional institutions and international financing institutions (see figure 16).

Figure 16
The United Nations in comparison to other development partners

	<i>United Nations development system entities</i>	<i>International financial institutions</i>	<i>Other multilateral and regional institutions</i>	<i>OECD/DAC partners</i>	<i>Southern partners</i>	<i>Thematic or alliance-based partners</i>
Providing evidence-based policy advice	70%	23%	29%	17%	7%	9%
Providing integrated policy advice where appropriate	63%	23%	31%	11%	4%	8%

Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

Abbreviations: DAC, Development Assistance Committee; OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

97. Greater collaboration at the country level is also visible in the notable increase of joint programmes, with 571 active joint programmes across 101 United Nations country teams with a combined budget of over \$4.7 billion, up significantly from 400 active joint programmes across 84 United Nations country teams and a combined budget of over \$3.4 billion the previous year.²

98. At the global level, the adoption of strategic plans for 13 entities in 2021 was an important opportunity to drive the further alignment of entities' corporate objectives and business models with the Sustainable Development Goals, as Member States instructed in the 2020 quadrennial review. The interim report on the United Nations development system response to COVID-19 showed some positive development in that regard, with the strategic plans reflecting a strong commitment to regaining or accelerating action towards transformative results and placing increased emphasis on joint programming. The UNDP strategic plan also contains a clear objective to further sharpen its offer of integrated support, providing demand-driven services to the system that meet Governments' policy and programming priorities, under the overall coordination of resident coordinators. This is a positive development as part of wider efforts by UNDP to consolidate its "integrator role" in a new generation of United Nations country teams.

99. These are significant achievements. At the same time, we must intensify all efforts towards a United Nations development system that shifts away from an increasingly obsolete model of single, "projectized" agency support that is inadequate to respond to the demands of the Sustainable Development Goals. The road ahead, in this regard, will not be simple. An independent external review analysing the impact of the United Nations development system reform at the country level,³ for example, suggested that the collective offer towards a "systems approach" with a greater role for integrated policy advice remained ad hoc at this early stage of the reforms.⁴ This is consistent with our own findings. In 2021, only 66 per cent of resident coordinators confirmed that they and the United Nations country teams were fully satisfied with the support they had received from respective headquarters to shape integrated policies to realize the Goals. The highest level of satisfaction was in Africa (86 per cent) and the lowest in Asia and the Pacific and in Europe and Central Asia (47 per cent each).

² Active joint programmes are those that expended funds in the past year.

³ Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Georgia and Uganda.

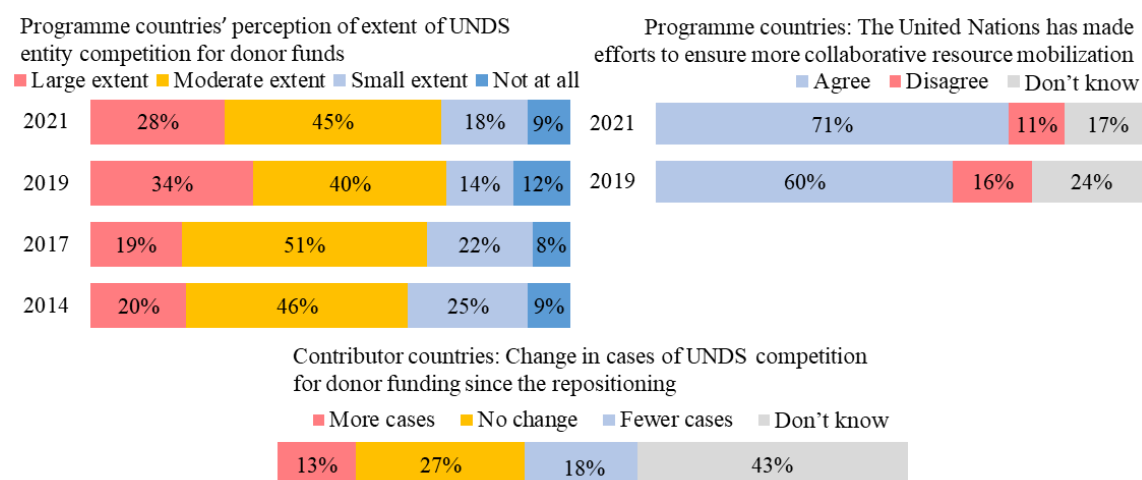
⁴ Silke Weinlich and others, *New Rules, Same Practice? Analysing UN Development System Reform Effects at the Country Level*, Discussion Paper 3/2022 (Bonn, German Development Institute, 2022).

100. Persistent competition among United Nations entities for donor funding remains a major disincentive to greater integration. At the global level, only 7 out of 29 entities have allocated at least 15 per cent of non-core resources for development to joint activities, at odds with the Member State mandate in resolution 72/279. In countries, nearly three quarters of programme country Governments report competition to a large or moderate extent, with little change since 2014 (see figure 17). Nearly half of contributing countries report no change since the reform and more than a fifth note an increase in competition.

101. It is positive to note, however, that 71 per cent of programme countries agreed that there had been an effort by United Nations entities to ensure more collaborative and coherent approaches to resource mobilization.

Figure 17

United Nations development system entity competition for donor funding still prevalent, but more efforts made for collaborative resource mobilization



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of Governments.

Abbreviation: UNDS, United Nations development system.

102. Ensuring that we succeed, universally, in providing integrated responses to country needs and priorities will remain a priority for 2022 and beyond. The Cooperation Framework and the accompanying workplans and funding framework must be utilized to their fullest by country teams to ensure that the spirit of collaboration in the Cooperation Framework translates into integrated programming and commensurate financing. UNDP, in its integrator function, has an important role to play.

Poverty eradication at the centre of our action

103. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world further off track in its goal to end poverty in all its forms. In 2020 alone, 131 million more people have been pushed into poverty. Over 276 million are estimated to be facing severe hunger owing to COVID-19, according to the World Food Programme. Addressing the weaknesses in current systems of health care, education and social protection, as well as systemic discrimination and unequal power relations that were laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic, is central to eradicating poverty and ensuring that no one is left behind. The 2020 quadrennial review placed renewed emphasis on action by the United Nations development system to strengthen its support to countries in these areas.

104. Accordingly, programme country Governments have emphasized Goal 1 (poverty eradication) among the top three Goals requiring United Nations assistance in the next two years, with the goal of enabling a green, resilient and inclusive recovery.

105. Overall, the United Nations was considered a valued partner of Governments, with 85 per cent of Governments noting that United Nations country teams have assisted their countries in assessing the situation of the poorest, and 80 per cent in addressing their needs.⁵

Accelerating universal health coverage

106. COVID-19 has uncovered long-ignored risks, including inadequate health systems, gaps in social protection and structural inequalities. It has also brought home the importance of emergency preparedness and lent greater urgency to the quest for universal health coverage. Requests for United Nations development system support to health and well-being remain strong, with specific demand for United Nations country team support for universal health coverage by 2030, primarily from Governments in low-income (76 per cent) and low-middle-income (78 per cent) countries.

107. In Our Common Agenda, I made specific proposals to strengthen the global health architecture. These include promoting a global vaccination plan for COVID-19, strengthening the World Health Organization, improving global health security and preparedness and moving towards universal health coverage. I was pleased to see Member State support for these proposals in the consultations on Our Common Agenda and will appreciate continued engagement as we chart the way ahead.

Achieving universal social protection by 2030

108. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted profound shortcomings in social protection and left 4 billion people, more than half of the world's population, unprotected. An overwhelming majority of host Governments (96 per cent) rated United Nations country team support for national social protection systems as effective. The response of United Nations country teams in implementing special and targeted measures to expand social protection for the poor and most vulnerable was rated as highly effective on targeted measures for children and youth (99 per cent) and refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (90 per cent), and to a lesser extent in the case of older people (58 per cent) and indigenous peoples (52 per cent).

109. This gives a solid foundation for increased support in the years ahead. In September 2021, I proposed the creation of the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, which aims to expand social protection to the 4 billion people left unprotected and to create at least 400 million jobs by 2030, mainly in the green, care and digital economies. It will provide countries with support to develop inclusive and integrated national employment and social protection strategies and to strengthen multilateral cooperation and increase access to international finance. The Accelerator will be supported by the High-Ambition Coalition of Ministers to promote job creation in emerging sectors. Building on the model followed in recent summits such as the Food Systems Summit, resident coordinators will mobilize United Nations country teams and other stakeholders in programme countries to ensure that the Global Accelerator supports countries' priorities and needs for social protection.

⁵ It was 91 per cent and 92 per cent, respectively, in 2020; however, the metric used was different and is therefore not comparable year-on-year.

Mobilizing collective action to transform education

110. Education systems around the world are at a crossroads. Over the past two years, pandemic-related restrictions led to countries experiencing on average 20 weeks of full school closures, with potentially dramatic consequences for future learning and school participation, particularly for girls and marginalized groups. This is exacerbating a pre-existing learning crisis in which half of all children in low- and middle-income countries were unable to read a basic text by age 10. Moreover, a seminal report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education showed that education systems all over the world were struggling to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and values needed to thrive in our rapidly changing world. A transformation of education is urgently needed to better prepare societies for an uncertain future.

111. The United Nations development system plays an important role in supporting Governments on Sustainable Development Goal 4. In 2021, 88 per cent of Governments reported receiving support from United Nations country teams in expanding access to inclusive and equitable quality education. Almost all resident coordinators assessed United Nations country team support on different elements of education as effective, such as their assistance in improving the digital literacy of children and adolescents (99 per cent) and reducing the number of out-of-school children, especially girls (96 per cent). With the support of the United Nations, 48.7 million out-of-school children, half of them girls, gained access to education, including 6.4 million children on the move and 31.7 million in humanitarian settings. At the same time, support for the education sector remains compartmentalized, and fewer than half of United Nations development system entities have a strategy in the sector, according to the headquarters survey. At the global level, a range of important steps have been taken to strengthen cooperation across the education system, including the establishment by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of a new Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee.

112. Boosting the offer of United Nations country teams on education is an important part of preparations for the Transforming Education Summit, which I will convene in September 2022. The Summit seeks to renew political and public commitment to education as a pre-eminent public good. It aims to mobilize the action, ambition, solidarity and solutions needed to reimagine education as a means of recovering pandemic-related learning losses and accelerating implementation of Goal 4. Under the leadership of the resident coordinator, United Nations country teams will support countries as they undertake inclusive national consultations to develop a national statement of commitment to transform education by 2030.

Strengthening national capacities to generate and use data

113. I remain frustrated with the lack of reliable and timely data, without which the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be properly monitored or achieved. It also makes our pledge to leave no one behind tragically elusive. Seven years into the implementation of the Goals, this is simply not acceptable.

114. Target 17.18 of the Goals aims to enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. We have not yet delivered on this commitment for most indicators.

115. This is an area where the United Nations development system, as a long-standing and valued partner of Governments, has a strong comparative advantage. In

2021, 95 per cent of United Nations country teams provided support to strengthen national statistical capacities, and 53 per cent report improved joint data collection and innovation. A large majority of Governments (91 per cent) and resident coordinators (85 per cent) agreed that the United Nations contributed to strengthening national capacities in statistics and planning. Agreed workplans to coordinate and strengthen national statistical capacities now exist in 43 per cent of United Nations country teams, more than a doubling of the previous year's share. United Nations country teams have also supported the strengthening of national statistical capacities in disaggregating data based on sex (82 per cent), age (76 per cent) and disability (65 per cent), and to a lesser extent on ethnicity (28 per cent) and race (20 per cent).

Towards more tangible progress on gender equality and ending violence against women and girls

116. According to the latest report of the World Economic Forum, it will take over 135 years to close the gender gap worldwide overall and 267 years to close the gender gap in terms of economic participation and opportunity. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against women and girls intensified; child marriage, on the decline in recent years, increased; and women continued to suffer a disproportionate share of job losses and increased care work.

117. As the United Nations development system continued to improve its focus on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, programme country Governments ranked gender equality second in areas that received significant support over the past two years. Among United Nations country teams that developed a Cooperation Framework in 2021, 19 out of 27 incorporated a dedicated gender equality outcome. Gender equality remained a major focus of joint activities, with 87 per cent of United Nations country teams reporting one or more joint programmes with a focus on Goal 5.

118. The year 2021 saw an increase in the capacity available to address countries' gender priorities in United Nations country teams. In addition to the presence of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 76 countries, gender advisers were deployed in 21 resident coordinator offices in countries without a UN-Women presence, through a partnership with the Entity. Eighty-six per cent of United Nations country teams have dedicated mechanisms, such as gender theme groups, to support joint work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

119. The quality of the United Nations support in terms of gender equality has been rated as effective overall by United Nations country teams (see figure 18).

Figure 18
Effectiveness of support

	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Strengthening institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks to prevent and eliminate violence and discrimination against women and girls	92%	5%	3%
Implementing specific measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence	88%	10%	2%
Gender equality expertise	95%	5%	0%
Enhancing the collection, availability and use of sex-disaggregated data	78%	14%	8%

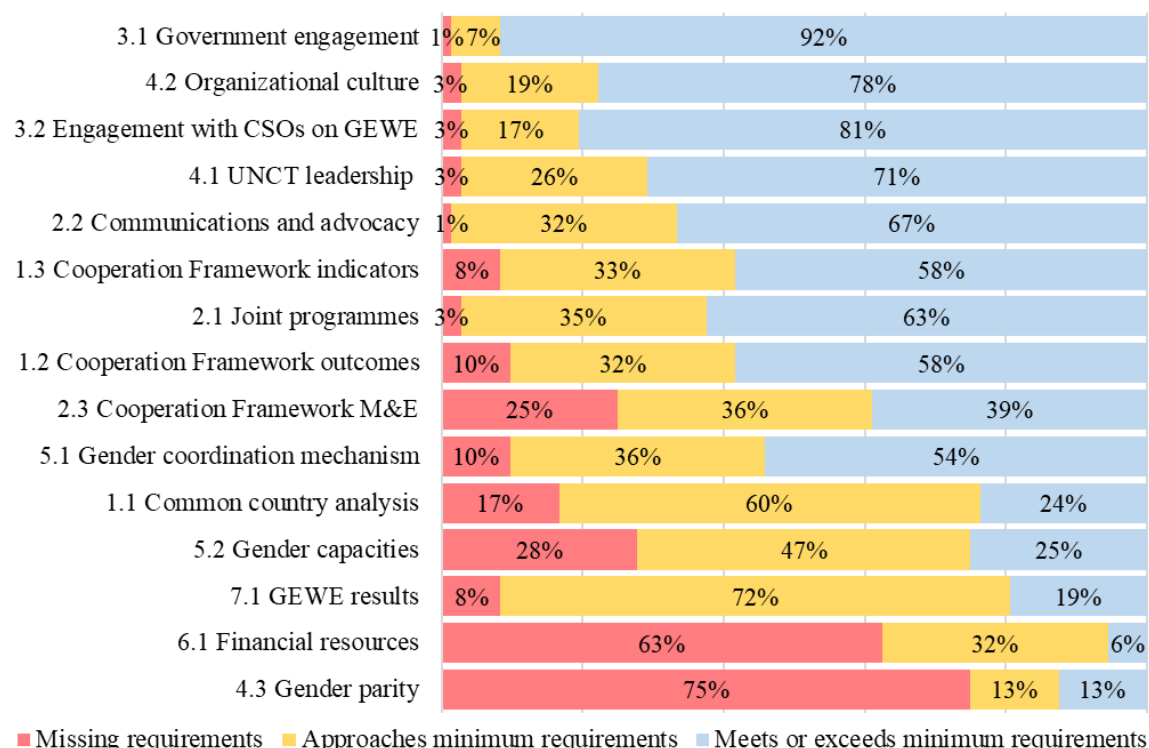
120. An important share of the work of United Nations country teams focused on addressing gender inequality in the response to COVID-19 and addressing violence against women and girls. As highlighted in its report for 2020–2021, the Spotlight Initiative, a partnership between the United Nations and the European Union to eliminate violence against women and girls, contributed to a 32 per cent increase in the national budget to prevent violence against women and girls and to sign or strengthen 84 laws and policies across 17 countries. The Initiative also aided a 22 per cent increase in the number of convictions of perpetrators of violence and provided over 650,000 women and girls with gender-based violence services despite COVID-19-related constraints and lockdowns.

121. Similarly, the focus of the COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund on gender yielded a multifold increase in resources allocated to programmes with gender equality as a primary target. The allocations jumped from 5 per cent of total funding (\$1.9 million) in the first call to 64 per cent (\$11.9 million) in the second. The model is now being replicated by other funds, such as the special trust fund for Afghanistan.

122. The establishment of a United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and gender equality scorecard for United Nations country teams has helped to ensure a gender-responsive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19 recovery. The country team scorecard submissions demonstrate increasing uptake of gender mainstreaming, as evidenced, inter alia, by the growing number of gender objectives in strategic plans and Cooperation Frameworks. At the global level, 64 per cent of all ratings fell into the “meets or exceeds” requirements categories. At the country level, 61 country teams submitted a report in 2021, up from 38 in 2020.

123. Figure 19 provides a detailed breakdown of performance in the past four years.

Figure 19
United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan performance, 2018–2021



Source: UN-Women, 2021.

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

124. That said, there is much more we need to do to reverse the trend on gender equality, at a time when Goal 5 has experienced little progress across regions for most targets and indicators and a worsening outlook as a result of the pandemic. Building on the progress we have made in gender parity and gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system, it is important that country teams aim high to ensure that we are able to help Governments to bring action to scale in a way that will help to truly change the dynamics on the ground. At this point in time, our efforts too frequently remain at a small scale to address the immense existing gender equality gaps. Looking at the past four years, of the 72 country teams that completed a comprehensive report against the country team scorecard, only 25 (34.7 per cent) met or exceeded 9 or more (60 per cent) of the 15 scorecard performance requirements.

125. In Our Common Agenda, I urged Member States and other stakeholders to consider five related and transformative measures, in line with my call to action on human rights: (a) the full realization of equal rights, including through repeal of all gender-discriminatory laws (target 5.1 of the Goals); (b) measures to promote gender parity in all spheres and at all levels of decision-making, including quotas and special measures (target 5.c); (c) facilitating women's economic inclusion, including through large-scale investment in the care economy and equal pay, and more support for women entrepreneurs (targets 5.4, 5.5 and 5.a); (d) greater inclusion of the voices of younger women; and (e) emergency response plans to accelerate the eradication of violence against women and girls (target 5.2).

126. In addition, in order to further improve the offer of the United Nations, I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to take the lead in reviewing the United Nations

system capacity on gender, comprising staffing, resources and architecture, to deliver on gender equality as a core priority across all entities, in close cooperation with UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The review will lead to recommendations on how to make gender equality a shared responsibility and priority across mandates, integrated into programming and funding benchmarks, and backed by skill sets and a staffing architecture that is coherent and maximizes expertise, while minimizing duplication.

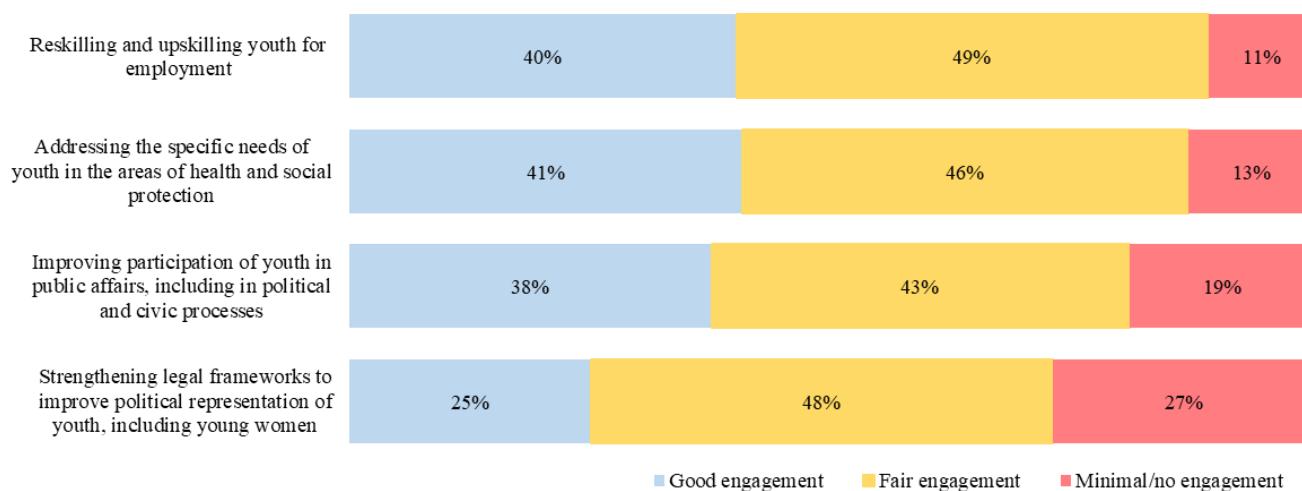
Facilitating meaningful participation and inclusion of youth

127. Young people have suffered serious setbacks to their learning, mental health and economic opportunities worldwide, compounding pre-existing gaps in the support for young people. At the same time, there is growing recognition of young people's role as positive agents of change and key contributors to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda. This is also reflected in the high demand for United Nations support on youth inclusion.

128. Among resident coordinators, 76 per cent indicated that their host country had requested support on youth (see figure 20). The United Nations Youth Strategy, established in 2018, is the first system-wide framework for working for, with and alongside youth. Among United Nations country teams, guided by the Strategy, 121 out of 130 country teams engage youth in their actions, with good engagement at the grass-roots level (80 per cent) and with girls and young women (80 per cent). Resident coordinators consider the engagement of United Nations country teams in addressing the specific needs of youth strongest in reskilling and upskilling youth for employment (89 per cent) and in health and social protection (87 per cent), and the weakest in strengthening legal frameworks to improve the political representation of youth.

Figure 20

Resident coordinators' response to United Nations country team engagement on youth



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of resident coordinators.

129. The 2022 report on the implementation of the Youth Strategy more fully captures the efforts of United Nations entities and 130 United Nations country teams against a set of key performance indicators and will show the breadth and depth of commitment to progressively improving United Nations system efforts for, by and with youth, while also pointing to areas in need of further attention for each entity and country team. Nonetheless, an evaluation of youth programming in the United

Nations system from 2015 to 2020 suggests that there remains considerable scope for improving how the United Nations development system engages with young people, to move beyond treating them as beneficiaries, and for strengthening efforts to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable youth.⁶

130. For the United Nations to be relevant and effective into the future, it must step up its work for and with young people, particularly at the country level. My proposal to establish a United Nations Youth Office in the United Nations Secretariat, if taken forward by Member States, would boost the ability of the entire United Nations system to meet this objective. Through a stronger and more sustainable focus on advocacy, innovation, coordination and system-wide accountability, the new Office would help to ensure that young people and their interests are at the centre of the Organization and the work of the United Nations development system at all levels.

Mainstreaming disability inclusion

131. Persons with disabilities are the world's largest minority, at 1 billion, representing more than 15 per cent of the world's population. Even under normal circumstances, persons with disabilities are less likely to gain access to health care, education and employment and to participate in the community. They are more likely to live in poverty, experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse, and are among the most marginalized in any crisis-affected community. COVID-19 has further compounded this situation, disproportionately affecting persons with disabilities both directly and indirectly. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as in all development efforts, is a vital part of achieving the pledge to leave no one behind and a critical test of the global commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda.

132. Since its launch in 2019, the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy has provided a concrete framework for bringing about transformative progress for persons with disabilities across both programmes and operations of the Organization. Progress on disability inclusion during the first two years since the Strategy's launch is clear. However, with only 15 per cent of United Nations development system entities and 21 per cent of United Nations country teams having met or exceeded at least 50 per cent of indicators in the Strategy's accountability framework, much remains to be achieved, and further efforts are needed to ensure full implementation of the Strategy.

133. Concerted efforts on disability inclusion from both United Nations development system entities and United Nations country teams across programmes and operations, particularly on consulting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, will be critical to achieving the goals set in the Strategy. In 2021, 44 per cent of United Nations development system entities met or exceeded accessibility requirements that enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of life. A total of 21 entities are addressing disability inclusion in their strategic plans in some form, although currently only 28 per cent met or exceeded framework requirements. A total of 44 per cent of entities are developing and implementing action plans to address physical and digital accessibility, while, in terms of consultation, only 12 per cent of entities and 36 per cent of country teams report meeting or exceeding framework requirements by meaningfully engaging with persons with disabilities across all aspects of their work, including planning, programme design and implementation.

134. Disability inclusion was mainstreamed in the system's COVID-19 response through coordinated action by the Strategy's entity focal point network and a time-

⁶ UNFPA, "What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth?", December 2021.

bound task team of United Nations country teams to support the development of response plans and dedicated measures to address the rights of persons with disabilities, including through inclusive and accessible communications and inclusion of persons with disabilities in vaccination campaigns and vaccine roll-out.

135. The Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund continued to fund 35 joint programmes in countries on integrated social protection, of which 10 are directly targeting persons with disabilities and 12 have mainstreamed disability into integrated policies on social protection and leaving no one behind. In addition, through the support of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2021, 42 joint programmes on disability inclusion were carried out at the country and multi-country levels.

Advancing human rights to leave no one behind

136. The 2020 quadrennial review requested that entities of the United Nations development system assist Governments, at their request, in their efforts to respect and fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments under international law, as a critical tool to operationalize the pledge to leave no one behind.

137. In response, most of the United Nations country teams (89 per cent) reported drawing on, for example, human rights treaty body recommendations to inform their analysis. In addition, 48 per cent assisted Governments with obligations under human rights treaties and 42 per cent with universal periodic review reporting. In some cases, this remains below the expectations of Governments, some of which noted that more financial and technical resources are needed to support compliance with human rights treaties and the preparation of human rights reports.

138. To further increase United Nations country teams' capacity and expertise on human rights, resident coordinators have continued, at the request of Member States and in consultation with them, to deploy human rights advisers in 54 countries (up from 43 in 2020), funded by the human rights mainstreaming multi-donor trust fund.

Realizing integrated and just transitions in energy, food systems and connectivity

139. Just transitions in energy, food systems and connectivity have the potential to unlock Sustainable Development Goal implementation, with multiplier effects across the Goals.

140. Just energy transitions will support countries' efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, integrating climate action as a base consideration across all efforts towards the development of a greener and more sustainable economy.

141. Transformed food systems will eliminate a major cause of inequality for the 3 billion people who cannot gain access to a healthy diet, substantially decrease the level of stunting and provide benefits in terms of cognitive development and educational attainment. It will decrease food system greenhouse gas emissions, boost resilience to climate shocks, help to reduce biodiversity loss, and substantially reduce the economic drag presented by inadequate nutrition.

142. A just digital transition will leverage the interconnectedness of people, organizations and technology to ensure that countries have access to quality education, remote work, e-commerce, financial technologies and payments systems, and the virtual delivery of essential services, ensuring that communities can reap the benefits of digitalization and adapt to the future of work, while ensuring that countries have access to environmental, economic and social data and observation systems to measure Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

143. Through the Food Systems Summit, the high-level dialogue on energy and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow in 2021, the United Nations development system has supported Member States in reaching key milestones, including 110 national pathways setting countries' priorities for food systems transitions and a global road map towards achieving Goal 7 by 2030. These achievements are direct results of our reform efforts. At the global level, the United Nations development system, under the leadership of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, was united in its advocacy efforts, pulling from individual agencies the expertise and reach to raise global ambition. Resident coordinators used their convening leadership to bring relevant stakeholders in support of countries' ambitions and needs.

144. We must now take this to the next level, to ensure that our plans and ambitions deliver concrete results on the ground. The reinvigorated resident coordinator system has opened new entry points for the United Nations to convene at the country level and assist Governments to maximize the opportunities and momentum generated by global summits and other global initiatives linked to these fundamental transitions.

Taking climate action and making peace with nature

145. The United Nations development system, with an increasingly active role on the part of the resident coordinators at the country level, supported countries in ensuring that intergovernmental processes in 2021, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, the first part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food Systems Summit and the high-level dialogue on energy, reflected national sustainable development priorities and in driving further ambition for climate action and environmental sustainability.

146. In preparation for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 120 countries were supported, through the Climate Promise initiative led by UNDP, in drafting new nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans or revising existing ones. The United Nations development system supported the preparation of a global road map to achieve Goal 7 by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. It helped Governments, business and other stakeholders to put forward voluntary energy compacts as part of the high-level dialogue on energy, building a path for just energy transitions to support the development of a greener and more sustainable economy.

147. We must bring the same resolve to the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022 to agree on a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Common Approach to Integrating Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions, endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in May 2021, provides the normative framework for mainstreaming biodiversity within the United Nations and catalysing collective action to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems. So far, 14 of 27 entities report having adjusted their strategies, policies and programmes to align them with the Common Approach, and 13 of 27 entities have considered the drivers of biodiversity loss in their strategic plans. Similarly, the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Egypt, and the upcoming United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, as well as the new negotiations on a global plastics treaty, provide additional opportunities to work towards a greener and more sustainable future.

148. At the country level, 83 per cent of host Governments reported having benefited from policy advice on climate action from the United Nations development system, and 75 per cent of resident coordinators and United Nations country team members agreed that environmental considerations other than climate action had been incorporated into different areas of programming and policy over the past year. Better integration of United Nations development system support to countries' objectives to achieve just and green transitions is a priority area of focus for the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in 2022.

Enabling countries' food systems transitions

149. Preparations for the Food Systems Summit in September 2021 deliberately adopted a systems approach that considered the interconnections in food and agriculture across production, markets, consumption, trade, environment, climate change and health.

150. Under the resident coordinators' leadership, United Nations country teams supported national conveners in 148 countries in gathering a broad range of stakeholders and articulating their priorities and potential solutions for sustainable food systems. Following 1,644 dialogues with 108,915 participants, United Nations country teams supported the development of 110 national pathways towards sustainable food systems by 2030, with each geared towards advancing national progress on multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

151. The United Nations development system is supporting follow-up through a dedicated food systems coordination hub taking over from the Food Systems Summit secretariat, to translate the pathways into policies and programmes aligned with national priorities in 2022 and beyond.

Supporting just digital transitions

152. Digital connectivity has increased since the pandemic started, but 2.9 billion people still lack access to the Internet, with 96 per cent of them living in developing countries; the digital divide is even wider for women and girls. The 2020 quadrennial review recognized these challenges and encouraged cooperation with programme countries to improve digital inclusion. Digital transitions enable access to quality education, virtual delivery of essential services (e.g. telehealth), remote work, e-commerce, financial technology (fintech) and digital payments and are powerful drivers of inclusion, increasing the participation of women, girls, young people, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, to leave no one behind.

153. United Nations country teams are already providing support to countries to prepare for a digital future. In Benin, the country team helped to set up an innovative digital platform with real-time data on direct foreign investments, aid and other development financing to support the Government with planning and budgeting aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. In Bangladesh, the United Nations is facilitating a digital trade platform for Sustainable Development Goal investments matchmaking. While individual examples abound, given that only 65 per cent of programme countries reported that the country team supported them in providing digital inclusion, we anticipate a major surge in this type of activity in the coming years. Resident coordinators also reported "relatively weak support by United Nations headquarters" in this area, at 41 per cent. United Nations entities will need to ensure ready capability to deal with the anticipated surge in demand.

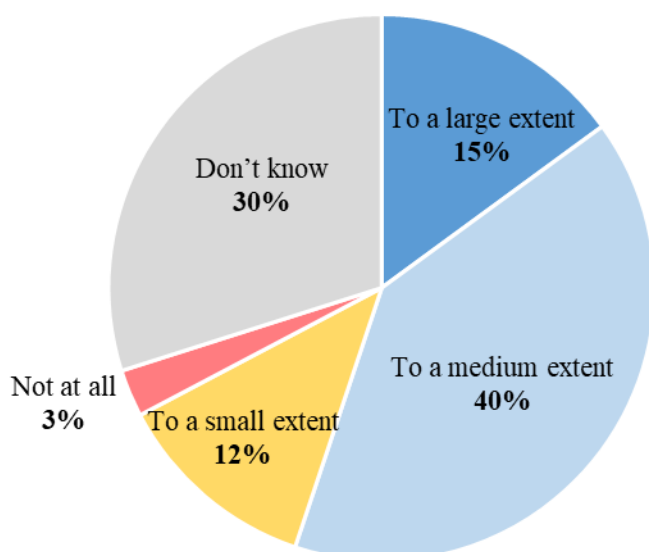
154. At the multilateral level, I have pointed in my report on Our Common Agenda to the need to develop shared proposals for a digital global compact to connect all people to the Internet. If endorsed by Member States, this could provide a useful frame for scaling up our action.

Support for economic transformation, increased financing for sustainable development and enhanced cooperation with international financial institutions

155. Reasserting the role of the United Nations in the global economic debate was one of my priorities in taking office. We have come a long way in this regard. The reform has better positioned the United Nations development system to support countries in building the necessary fiscal space for their sustainable development, with resident coordinators' enhanced leadership and authority to convene international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, the private sector and other stakeholders in the country. Resident coordinators are now supported by an economist in all resident coordinator offices and by the establishment of a robust United Nations network of economists. They also benefit from much stronger links to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, regional economic and social commissions and other specialized entities with expertise in trade, financing for development and economic transformation.

156. It is encouraging that 86 per cent of programme country Governments agree that the United Nations provides adequate support to financing for the Sustainable Development Goals and that 78 per cent similarly agree that the integrated national financing frameworks help countries to strengthen their financing options for sustainable development. Enabled by the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, United Nations country teams scaled up their support to design integrated national financing frameworks and reinforce the Sustainable Development Goals financing architecture in 69 countries. I was also pleased to see 67 per cent of programme countries indicate a noticeable improvement in our engagement at the country level in the past year (see figure 21). Direct engagement of international financial institutions in the preparation of common country analyses has increased from 36 per cent to 54 per cent from 2020 to 2021. Among United Nations country teams, 54 per cent reported having a formal relationship with international financial institutions and 55 reported joint initiatives with such institutions in 2021, an increase of 25 per cent over 2020. The initiatives were mostly with the World Bank (40), the International Monetary Fund (20), the African Development Bank (15) and the Asian Development Bank (13). Stronger efforts will continue to be made to engage international financial institutions and multilateral development banks in Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

Figure 21
Improvement in the collaboration with international financial institutions over the past four years



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of programme country Governments.

157. At the global level, the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond resulted in a single, ambitious menu of options addressing policies for the short, medium and long term that reflected the variety of needs and views of various stakeholders, including Member States, and helped to secure critical financial relief for countries through targeted advocacy efforts, such as a high-level event on debt and liquidity in March 2021. Our advocacy efforts also helped to secure the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative until the end of 2021; the issuance of \$650 billion in special drawing rights in August 2021, aimed at boosting global liquidity; and the establishment of the International Monetary Fund Resilience and Sustainability Trust, including support for vulnerable middle-income countries.

158. Notwithstanding those advances, much work is needed to fix the long-standing weaknesses in the global financial system, which continues to punish the poor through its structural features with regard to debt management, credit access and availability of finance liquidity. At the global level, I have called for a reform of the global financial architecture, including by boosting and leveraging the resources of international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, to create an enabling environment for Sustainable Development Goal investment. In support thereof, we must continue to improve our support at the country level. Resident coordinators report that it remains difficult for them to secure adequate support on economic policy advice from entities not physically present in the country, and only 40 per cent of United Nations country team respondents agreed that they benefited to a great or moderate extent from increased support of entities' headquarters to leverage financing in the past year.

Cooperation and partnerships to support a just transition

159. Expectations are high regarding the role of the United Nations in convening and facilitating partnerships to realize the 2030 Agenda. It is noteworthy that 86 per cent of host Governments agreed that the resident coordinators had contributed to leveraging partnerships in support of national efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda.

Contributor countries, at 93 per cent, largely considered the effectiveness of the United Nations in convening stakeholders, leveraging partnerships and facilitating knowledge-sharing to be average or above average compared with other development partners (see figure 22). When asked about preferred providers of support in leveraging partnerships, 70 per cent of Governments chose the United Nations development system.

160. In considering various categories of stakeholders, developing countries gave high marks to United Nations engagement with civil society, including groups representing young people, women and persons with disabilities, among others. We are now intensifying work with resident coordinators and the International Labour Organization to ensure that we increase United Nations country team engagement with trade unions and employers' organizations.

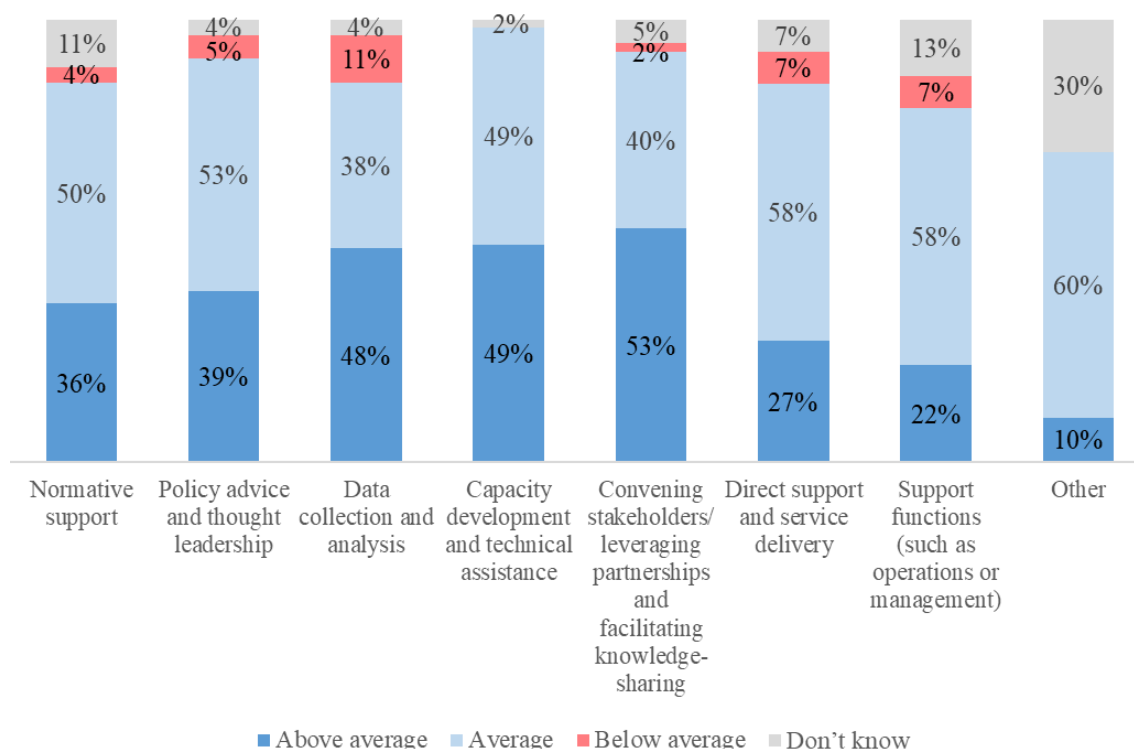
161. In countries, this positive trend is also visible in the increased levels of engagement in the new common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks of civil society (88 per cent in the former and 90 per cent in the latter) and the private sector (57 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively), among other stakeholders.

162. As reported above, resident coordinators have also played an essential role in coalescing support in countries in the lead-up to the Food Systems Summit, the high-level dialogue on energy and the most recent United Nations Climate Change Conference. In all cases, with strategic direction from the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and its Chair, resident coordinators convened stakeholders to support countries in achieving a high level of ambition and support commitments towards concrete results for a more sustainable and equitable future.

163. These are positive signs that the role of the resident coordinator as a convener of sustainable development actors in countries has taken root and can make a meaningful difference in advancing sustainable development.

164. Other types of partnerships have contributed to improving the United Nations offer. For example, 20 United Nations development system entities indicated that they had integrated South-South cooperation results in their results reporting frameworks and 17 entities supported South-South projects financed through trust funds from the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, including deploying vital medical supplies and mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 22 countries. As reflected in the 2020 quadrennial review, volunteerism can also be an important means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2021, over 10,000 United Nations Volunteers, 85 per cent of them from the Global South, served across the Secretariat and agencies, funds and programmes, including 245 in resident coordinator offices.

Figure 22
Effectiveness of the United Nations development system compared with other development partners



Source: 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of contributors.

165. There is room for improvement in managing and monitoring ongoing partnerships: 24 per cent of resident coordinators reported developing a United Nations country team approach to partnerships, a slight improvement from 18 per cent in 2019, and 25 of 29 United Nations development system entities reported having a partnership policy or guidelines. Only about 67 per cent of entities reported having a global monitoring and reporting platform in place to track partnership status and results. In addition, a 2021 assessment of the United Nations development system by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network suggested that too many partnerships are driven primarily by short-term fundraising objectives of United Nations entities. The assessment underlines the need for more skills, structures and processes to position the system as a credible and strategic partner with the private sector. To address this, stronger links are being built between the resident coordinator system and the Global Compact, in particular through its country-level local networks, which provide pools of private sector actors committed to advancing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. New Global Compact regional hubs are being established to provide additional capacity to local networks and United Nations country teams, to strengthen local private sector engagement, including in countries currently without a local network. The hubs will coordinate both strategic and operational activities, from programme design and contextualization and delivery to policy engagement, growth, fundraising, and United Nations and small and medium-sized enterprise engagement, for the local networks. For instance, this includes dedicated capacity to scope out private sector partnership readiness for potential incubation of new local networks, in alignment with country priorities.

166. We also noted with concern that satisfaction with United Nations support to partnerships was lower in countries with small programmes, including in small island developing States. This is counter-intuitive, as these countries perhaps present the highest needs and demands for partnerships. We will take steps to course-correct.

167. A successful example to follow is the collaboration enabled by the United Nations Office for Partnerships with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research on the *United Nations Research Road Map for the COVID-19 Recovery*, published in November 2020. This collaborative initiative demonstrates how science and global collaboration help the world to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic while focusing on the needs of people being left behind. Development of the Road Map was co-designed with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and involved a coalition of 38 research funders from around the world. Over a 15-month period, at least \$804 million was invested in almost 4,000 research projects relevant to the Road Map and the Secretary-General's call to action.

168. Another important step to strengthen the United Nations partnership ecosystem was the launch of the United Nations partnership group, an informal United Nations community of practice on partnerships with the aim to identify connection points, share information, co-create and tackle obstacles together. The group is led by the United Nations Office for Partnerships, the Global Compact and the Development Coordination Office.

B. Countries in special situations

169. From the outset of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, I committed to working with the system to provide targeted, nationally owned support to all countries; there is no “cookie cutter” approach for the Sustainable Development Goals, and each country is unique. In doing so, the system has given special attention to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, African countries and middle-income countries, in line with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

170. Expenditures on operational activities for development, including humanitarian assistance, in countries in special situations have continued to grow (see figure 23). Since 2015, expenditures in small island developing States grew by 60 per cent, exceeding the 47 per cent growth in programme countries in general. Expenditure in the least developed countries also grew significantly, by 51 per cent. By the end of 2020, the least developed countries accounted for 50 per cent of expenditures in all programme countries.

Figure 23
Expenditures on operational activities for development, including humanitarian assistance, by country group

Country group	Number of countries	Total 2020 expenditure (millions of United States dollars)	Expenditure as a share of the total (percentage)	Average expenditure per country (millions of United States dollars)		Five-year trend in expenditures	Expenditure per capita (United States dollars)
				2020	2015		
Least developed countries	46	15 903	50	346	224	+51%	15.04
Small island developing States	55	941	3	17	11	+60%	13.23
Landlocked developing countries	32	8 057	25	252	200	+26%	15.11

Country group	Number of countries	Total 2020 expenditure (millions of United States dollars)	Expenditure as a share of the total (percentage)	Average expenditure per country (millions of United States dollars)		Five-year trend in expenditures	Expenditure per capita (United States dollars)
				2020	2015		
Africa	54	13 545	42	251	182	+37%	10.11
Middle-income countries	109	16 438	52	151	118	+24%	2.86
Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations	53	17 513	55	310	326	+58%	17.08
All programme countries	163	31 810	100	195	132	+47%	4.85

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

171. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, adopted in March 2022 at the first part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, provides critical guidance for the United Nations development system to further adapt its support to the least developed countries. It underscores the need to support sustainable and inclusive economic transformation, including by building productive capacities in health and education; investing in digital infrastructure; developing science, technology and innovation capabilities; designing and implementing green industrial policies; and diversifying economic and export structures. In the Programme of Action, United Nations development system entities are called upon to assist resident coordinators in mainstreaming programme commitments into national development planning in a coordinated and cohesive manner, and United Nations entities are requested to integrate the Programme into their strategic documents. Implementation of the Programme of Action can build on support provided through the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, which facilitates the countries' access to the science, technology and innovation capacity that they need to promote the structural transformation of their economies, eradicate poverty and foster sustainable development.

172. The United Nations development system has also enhanced support for graduation, in particular of the four countries expected to graduate out of the least developed country category during the current quadrennial review cycle,⁷ including through the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility, which brings together country-specific and integrated advisory and capacity-building services across the United Nations system, and the inter-agency task force on least developed country graduation.

173. Implementing the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 remains a priority. I welcome in this regard the strong partnership between the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency and the Economic Commission for Africa to provide technical support and capacity development to landlocked developing countries in Africa to formulate, finance and implement transport infrastructure projects. In addition, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are implementing a South-South and triangular cooperation project to scale up sustainable green economy approaches in landlocked developing countries in Central Asia. Crucially, annual spending on operational activities for development in the 32 landlocked developing countries has increased by 26 per cent since 2015 to surpass \$8 billion.

⁷ Bhutan (2023), Angola (2024), Sao Tome and Principe (2024) and Solomon Islands (2024).

174. Africa's growth contracted by an estimated 2.1 per cent in 2020, the continent's first recession in half a century, and the level of debt is surging again, from 40 per cent to almost 70 per cent in 2022. The aspirations captured in the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda are at serious risk of not being met. In 2021, the 54-member interdepartmental task force on African affairs worked to enhance United Nations coordination in support of African priorities, for instance identifying energy access as key to Sustainable Development Goal implementation and a core area where the United Nations could create added value. I have also detailed above the role played by the Regional Collaborative Platform in Africa in bringing further support to countries' priorities and needs, including the work done to help countries to reap the benefits from the African Continental Free Trade Area for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

175. I have detailed in the present report the support provided to small island developing States as part of the multi-country offices review, which complements the global efforts spearheaded by the Office of the High Representative. Encouragingly, United Nations spending on operational activities for development in small island developing States has increased by 60 per cent since 2015. We must continue and enhance our efforts, given the increased vulnerabilities of small island developing States stemming from the inability of most of them to have access to official development assistance or concessional finance due to their status as middle-income countries, and their high levels of vulnerability stemming from their unique geographical contexts, dependence on imports and reliance on tourism.

176. With approximately 75 per cent of the world's population living in middle-income countries, which represent about one third of global gross domestic product (GDP), we need a complete revamping of our support to these countries. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/215](#), the United Nations development system will carry out a mapping exercise, to be submitted at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly, to provide an overview of our support to middle-income countries. The most fundamental task at hand, however, is to revisit the prevailing measurement of well-being altogether.

177. Accordingly, in my report on Our Common Agenda, I have urged Member States to consider measures of progress that complement GDP, in line with target 17.19 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the General Assembly, in its resolution [76/203](#), welcomed my recommendation to develop a multidimensional vulnerability index, in particular for small island developing States. The President of the General Assembly appointed a high-level panel, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and the former Prime Minister of Norway, to finalize the index by December 2022. This process will also inform the proposal of CEB on metrics to complement GDP, which I hope will be taken forward by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It is a top priority to help to advance this debate so that the world can better capture the vulnerability of States, with the objective of developing more effective solutions for sustainable development, including by better guiding development financing.

IV. The road ahead: an integrated, efficient and accountable United Nations development system to support just transitions to a sustainable, inclusive future

178. The support provided by the United Nations development system the past year planted the seeds to further advance the Sustainable Development Goals, including ensuring a COVID-19 response aligned with the imperative of a just, equitable and

sustainable recovery; bringing the full force of resident coordinators' convening power to advance countries' positions and priorities ahead of, and in follow-up to, the key summits organized the past year on climate action, energy and food systems; and supporting countries in addressing the impacts of COVID-19, climate change and growing financial and economic uncertainties. This has helped to keep the Goals and climate commitments alive amid particularly turbulent times.

179. The year 2021 also offered critical lessons for the road ahead: we need to do more if we are to see a shift to programmatic and advisory support from United Nations country teams that can provide the needed scale and acceleration in Sustainable Development Goal implementation. There is significant scope to benefit even more from resident coordinators' convening role to make progress at scale, especially in follow-up to global summits that have inspired more ambition and momentum. The path to providing countries with support for the economic transformation and expansion of their fiscal space is becoming clearer, and the demand is considerable. We will need to work in tandem with an overhaul of the international financial architecture for longer-term solutions.

180. We are conscious that optimal support to countries in these areas is contingent on further progress in consolidating our reforms and seeing through wider behavioural changes across the system. The present report highlights specific areas where further refinement is required to best support the United Nations country teams. These include fully aligning agencies' programming documents with the Cooperation Framework; further tailoring the configuration of country teams to align with country needs and priorities, including in humanitarian and crisis settings; supporting a more structural realignment of incentives and business models in agencies to ensure that the United Nations system, collectively, is able to move away from a predominant emphasis on small-scale projects to focus on high-quality and large-scale support, leveraging expertise from a wide array of agencies; and consolidating the support from multi-country offices and ensuring that our regional assets can deploy expertise to countries on demand.

181. Bringing results with the scale and ambition demanded by the 2030 Agenda and made ever more existential by compounding crises will also require strengthening accountability for results within the UN development system. This was a central request of Member States in the 2020 quadrennial review and resolution 76/4 on the review of the functioning of the resident coordinator system, which I welcome wholeheartedly. Member States requested full adherence to the reporting model, which is at the heart of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system. They requested further progress to ensure that our operation services work optimally and most efficiently to best support our programmes, and to advance results-based reporting and system-wide evaluation to provide them with relevant findings and data points to facilitate their oversight. Crucially, Member States also recommitted themselves to advancing commitments made in the funding compact, to align financing and funding incentives with the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States also agreed to make full use of the current funding model for the resident coordinator system, to ensure that it is fully funded.

182. In 2021, we charted another important pathway in our journey to transformation. With the impetus of the resident coordinator system review, and new tools such as the revised management and accountability framework and new strategic plans for some agencies, there are signs that the dual reporting model is translating into shifts in culture and behaviour towards a greater focus on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Improved system-wide results reporting systems at the country, regional and global levels have improved the visibility of United Nations actions, and the creation of the System-wide Evaluation Office, financed from extrabudgetary resources or staffed by secondees, is now well under way. Numerous evaluations and

assessments continue to provide positive feedback on our direction, while injecting new perspectives and ideas on how to accelerate progress in areas that still require special attention. Despite this important progress, however, the continuing shortfall in funding for the resident coordinator system remains a risk to our reforms and ultimate objectives to advance the 2030 Agenda.

183. With 2022 proving to be an even more challenging year, it is essential that we consolidate our progress and meet the objectives we had set for ourselves at the beginning of this transformative journey. Member States have provided us with important guidance in the resolution on the review of the resident coordinator system in that regard. In 2022, the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group will be presenting to governing bodies a United Nations development system reform checklist to support their oversight role and will be providing agencies of the system with a self-reporting scorecard to allow them to report on progress made. The System-wide Evaluation Office, upon the imminent recruitment of its Director, will finalize the system-wide evaluation policy to ensure that we are able to learn in real time from our actions. In addition, the revised quadrennial comprehensive policy review framework and draft results framework on the resident coordinator system, when finalized, will provide important additional tools for Member State oversight of our reform efforts in the Economic and Social Council. At the request of Member States, I will continue to closely monitor the performance of the funding model for the resident coordinator system in the next year, and if necessary, I will revert on whether Member States should reconsider the proposal I conveyed in the resident coordinator system review, including a greater share of regular budget funding as part of a revised model.

A. Ensuring full adherence to the quadrennial review and the dual reporting model

184. In its resolution [75/290](#) A on the review of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly re-emphasized the responsibility and prerogative of the Council and its operational activities for development segment as an accountability platform for providing guidance to, and overall coordination of, the United Nations development system. The segment is essential for Member States to strengthen Member State oversight of United Nations system-wide performance and, specifically, the resident coordinator system.

185. In a survey of United Nations development system entities, 26 out of 27 entities confirmed that their new strategic plans now encompass efforts to work better and in a more integrated way with other entities. All entities surveyed (representing 94 per cent of all United Nations development system expenditures on operational activities) reported on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in their governing body. Secretariat entities now also provide this information through the present report and in their respective engagement with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. Following a request from their governing bodies, several United Nations development system entities have also improved alignment of their strategic plan indicators with those of the monitoring and reporting framework of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

186. For example, the new UNDP integrated results and resources framework shares common and complementary indicators with other agencies, including 11 quadrennial comprehensive policy review indicators. Ten United Nations entities coordinated efforts to develop common development output indicators to strengthen the tracking of system-wide results, as well as common impact and outcome indicators.

187. In addition, the joint meeting of the executive boards of UNDP/UNFPA/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, UN-Women and the World Food Programme in 2021 was dedicated to examining how to leverage the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and United Nations development system repositioning to accelerate Sustainable Development Goal achievements in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

188. These are signs of increased alignment of the United Nations development system with the mandates contained in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the reform efforts. Most importantly, these efforts demonstrate the strong leadership by Member States in transforming the United Nations development system. To support the oversight function of the Economic and Social Council, we have also taken important steps to enhance the transparency of activities of the entire United Nations development system, including by continuing to enhance data gathering in my reports to the segment and in the report on the Development Coordination Office by the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. For example, in its reports this year, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has aligned the monitoring framework of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review with the additional mandates in resolution [72/279](#), ensuring a comprehensive overview of our progress – or lack thereof – against quadrennial review requirements. Pursuant to resolution [76/4](#), the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group this year includes a draft results framework with indicators and targets. Taken together, these reports offer unprecedented information, data and insights to facilitate oversight and decision-making by Member States. I invite Member States to continue to make full use of these important accountability tools to ensure that the performance and results of the United Nations development system are on par with our shared ambitions, needs and priorities.

189. In May 2018, resolution [72/279](#) set out the parameters of a new set of accountabilities within United Nations country teams, with United Nations entities accountable to their governing bodies with regard to their respective mandates and reporting, and periodically to resident coordinators on their contribution to collective results under the Cooperation Framework. This is a major feature of these reforms and an essential step towards greater leadership and accountability in the United Nations development system.

190. These new accountabilities were devised to bring the United Nations development system in full alignment with our common objective to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, ensuring that the United Nations can leverage the assets and expertise across the system in its support to Governments. In my report on the review of the functioning of the resident coordinator system ([A/75/905](#)), I highlighted inconsistencies in the implementation of the dual reporting model, reflecting on instances where agencies had not yet fully translated these new accountabilities into their internal processes; and cases where programme country Governments themselves, or other local development partners, did not adequately recognize the leadership role of the resident coordinator, thus contributing to a fragmented response. At the time, I highlighted the need for a deeper shift in behaviour and entity business models to better reflect alignment with the dual reporting model.

191. Resolution [76/4](#) on the review of the functioning of the resident coordinator system contained clear guidance in that regard, with a request that the United Nations development system ensure full adherence to the dual reporting model.

192. The revised management and accountability framework endorsed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in September 2021 is an important tool in that regard, setting working relationships and accountabilities within the United

Nations development system between the country, regional and global levels. Most resident coordinators and United Nations country team members (84–87 per cent) reported an improvement in the implementation of the framework this year, with over 75 per cent of country team members reporting that their job description included provisions that recognize their reporting line to the resident coordinator. Progress on the mutual appraisal system set out in the framework, however, remains uneven. While inputs from country team members are already integrated systematically in the resident coordinator performance assessment process, only 38 per cent of country team members included inputs from resident coordinators in their performance appraisals, and only 32 per cent of resident coordinators reported providing inputs to more than a third of country team members' appraisals.

193. The adoption by 13 United Nations entities of new strategic plans for the period 2022–2025 was another opportunity to further align the entities' strategic directions with reform objectives. The preliminary results of the system-wide evaluation of the United Nations development system response to COVID-19⁸ note that the 13 strategic plans assessed in their review had been well positioned within the framework of the United Nations development system. Most made explicit references to joint work linked to the Cooperation Framework. However, most fell short of offering concrete commitments to achieving the overall objective of a more coherent United Nations response to national priorities and needs in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals. Even more concerning, most strategic plans lacked a specific reference to their contribution to support a development coordination system and a new generation of United Nations country teams, or to otherwise advance United Nations development system reforms as guided by Member States in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

194. Evidence at this stage indicates that the critical changes prompted by the repositioning process to United Nations system coordination structures, capacities and tools and leading to adjustments to corporate policies and business models remain slow. This continues to hamper collaboration at the country level, including as a result of different agency programming and funding processes that make coordinated work more cumbersome. We must accelerate this effort as a matter of priority.

195. Pursuant to resolution 76/4, the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group will be providing to the Chairs of executive boards across the United Nations development system a United Nations development system reform checklist and a self-reporting scorecard on the implementation of the dual accountability function for each of the agencies. I am certain that these two tools will be very helpful to both United Nations development system entities and the respective governing bodies that are working to maximize the impacts of these reforms. In 2022, I also expect the Group, under the Chair's leadership, to take concrete steps to address any outstanding challenges relating to familiarity with, implementation of and compliance with the management and accountability framework, including by revamping agency-specific incentive structures, as necessary. Going forward, we must continue to develop a shared organizational culture in which cooperation is the default option to deliver better results for countries.

⁸ Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/interim-report-system-wide-evaluation-unds-response-covid-19>.

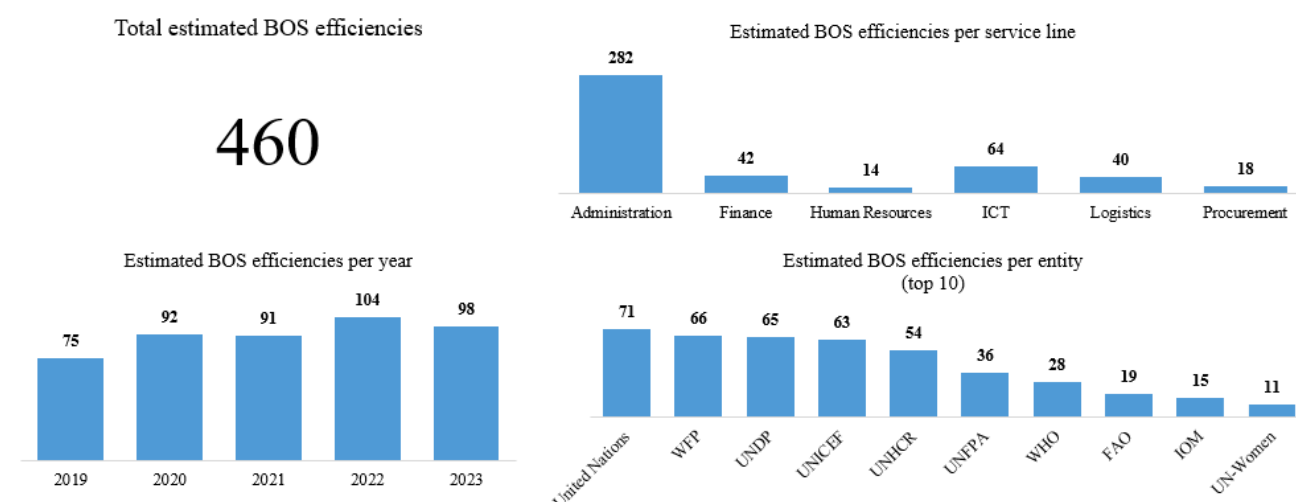
B. Delivering efficient and effective business operations

196. Advancing common business operations in United Nations country teams was a central element of the United Nations development system reforms from the outset. I remain convinced that these efforts are essential to enhancing and enabling joint work, while also generating efficiencies that can be redeployed by respective United Nations entities to development programmes on the ground. It is simple: every dollar saved through more efficient operations represents an additional dollar for programmes and for people.

197. In response to my proposals in that regard, in resolution 72/279 Member States endorsed a set of system-wide improvements targeting four primary work streams: the business operations strategy; establishing United Nations common premises; global shared service centres; and common back offices. In previous reports, we have reported on the establishment of important “enablers” for this work, including mutual recognition of business procedures across United Nations entities; commonly agreed costing and pricing principles; and agreement on a methodology to capture and report on efficiencies.

198. Similarly, all 131 United Nations country teams now have business operations strategies in place, ahead of schedule, with significant potential to unlock considerable efficiency gains, currently estimated at \$460 million over a five-year period (see figure 24). For example, the consolidation of security services from private sector firms for staff and premises at the country level has the potential to generate over \$21 million in savings; the sharing and consolidating of communications infrastructure and local information and communications technology support functions can save nearly \$28 million, and a further \$16.5 million can be saved through joint procurement services.

Figure 24
Estimated efficiency gains from business operations strategies, 2019–2023
(Millions of United States dollars)

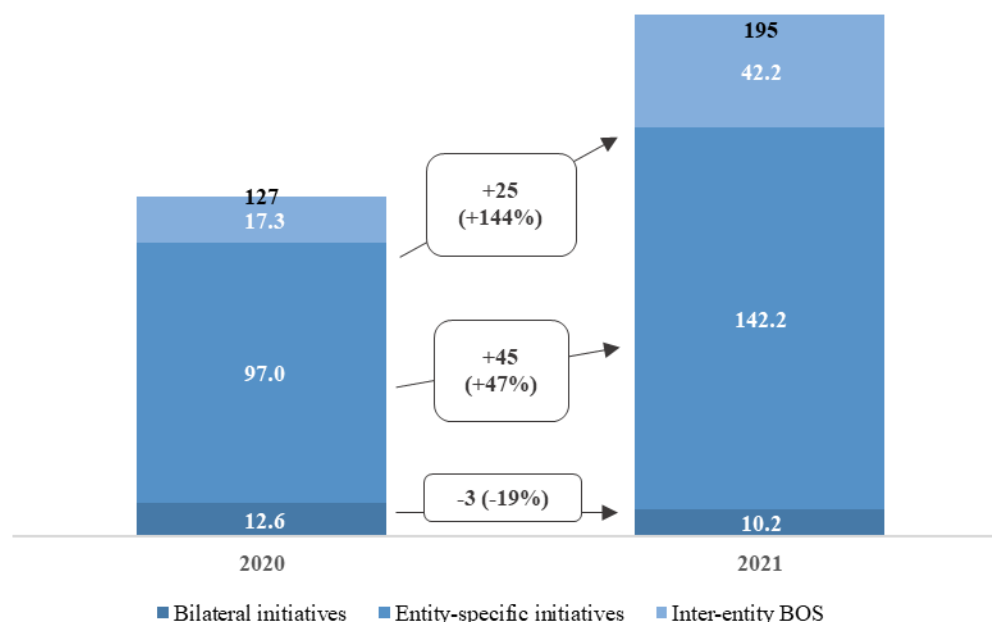


Source: Development Coordination Office, 2021.

Abbreviations: BOS, business operations strategy; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ICT, information and communications technology; IOM, International Organization for Migration; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children’s Fund; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization.

199. Overall, efficiency initiatives in place resulted in savings of close to \$195 million in 2021, a 53 per cent increase from \$127 million in 2020. The largest efficiency gains compared with 2020 were in the areas of business operations strategies, which, with the roll-out to 131 United Nations country teams completed, increased by 144 per cent (+\$25 million) compared with 2020, and entity-specific initiatives, which increased by 47 per cent (+\$45 million) compared with 2020, while efficiencies from bilateral initiatives were 19 per cent lower (-\$3 million) than 2020 figures (see figure 25).

Figure 25
Savings from efficiency initiatives
(Millions of United States dollars)



Source: Development Coordination Office, 2021.

Abbreviation: BOS, business operations strategies.

200. This corresponds to 63 per cent of the initial estimated efficiency gains of \$310 million yearly by 2022. While it is notable progress from the previous year, we must ensure that progress is accelerated in the next semester if we are to reach the objective of annual savings of \$310 million set for this year.

201. While these are unprecedented and much welcomed steps, the efficiency efforts of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group will require continued investment in terms of time and leadership by the Group to remain on track. The establishment of common premises and common back offices, for example, remains behind schedule. By the end of 2021, the design of common back offices had been initiated in 18 countries, instead of the initial proposal to establish common back offices for all United Nations country teams by 2022. A total of 26 per cent of United Nations system entities are currently in common premises, compared with 23 per cent at the end of 2020. With the existing common premises in countries with a larger United Nations presence, this amounts to 45 per cent of United Nations staff being co-located in common premises. In addition, new common premises arrangements were completed in Guyana, Jamaica, Lebanon and Uruguay in 2021, and a further 18

United Nations country teams have ongoing projects aimed at establishing new common premises in their countries.

202. Increased emphasis is needed on the establishment of global shared and regional service centres to enable and complement efforts at the country level. We must also consolidate our efforts on efficiency reporting. A total of 39 per cent of entities now have policies in place to strengthen their reporting processes on efficiency gains, an improvement from 33 per cent last year. However, as at the end of 2021, less than 35 per cent of entities reported to their governing bodies on efficiency gains resulting from business operations strategies, common premises or other such factors, a number unchanged from the previous year. To support entities' reporting, a new efficiency dashboard was introduced to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in 2022, providing a consolidated overview of progress and impact of the different inter-agency efficiency initiatives at the country, regional and global levels. The dashboard will be available publicly in the course of 2022.

203. While there is unquestionably more buy-in and commitment across the system to see these reforms through, I received with concern the news that some agencies were reviving the idea of "opt-outs" from important initiatives that could help to yield significant savings. This would of course depart from the reform objectives set out by Member States. I thank the principals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, in particular the Co-Chairs of the Group's Business Innovations Group, for their remarkable leadership, which has helped to overcome centrifugal forces and bring all entities back to this joint effort with a shared sense of commitment.

204. We are acutely aware that stepping back is not an option. It is critical that we preserve the ambition and integrity of our collective commitments, while ensuring the necessary flexibility to adapt to changing operational requirements and to continue to fine-tune our strategy as we move ahead.

205. I have also requested the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to continue to directly oversee this central element of the reform, with the ultimate goal of increasing the share of funds allocated to programmes rather than administrative costs. In response, the Group has devised a revised efficiency road map with specific deliverables and quantified efficiency gains targets to drive accelerated progress across the four work streams, with improved reporting to Member States as we move ahead.

C. Improved system-wide results and evaluation to drive performance

System-wide results

206. Both the funding compact and the 2020 quadrennial review call for strengthening transparency and commitment to system-wide results. In countries, annual results reports are a key tool to ensure accountability of the work of United Nations country teams vis-a-vis host Governments. In 2021, a record 99 per cent of annual country team results reports were produced, compared with 69 per cent in 2020 and 64 per cent in 2019. A large majority (89 per cent) of Governments saw improvements in the quality of the report and 83 per cent found that the reports were well linked to national development results, although 42 per cent stated that the reports did not include sufficient financial data.

207. As mentioned earlier, in 2021 regional collaborative platforms also published, for the second consecutive year, reports on system-wide results achieved by regional offices of the United Nations development system in their respective regions. The reports are an important tool for Member States to assess results achieved in regions in support of countries' priorities.

208. At the global level, the efforts of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, supported by the Development Coordination Office, led to further refinements of a shared methodology allowing, for the first time, system-wide reporting on the contribution of the United Nations development system to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the report of the Chair of the Group. The report, the first of its kind, bridges a historic accountability gap in the United Nations system. UN-Info, as the only tool for a comprehensive overview of system-wide activities and results, now draws on reporting from 109 United Nations country teams, an increase from the funding compact baseline of 32 in 2018. This is a significant improvement.

209. I also welcome the fact that common standards for system-wide reporting of financial data have been agreed and are under implementation. The roll-out of the standards for financial reporting has been a critical system-wide use case for the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General. All entities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group now submit financial data to CEB for publication on its new website (<https://unsceb.org/financial-statistics>), enhancing the transparency of funding flows. Among the Group's entities with country activities, 92 per cent are now reporting the data disaggregated by country. The proportion of entities that submit disaggregated data by Sustainable Development Goal has improved considerably, from 29 per cent in 2021 to 83 per cent in 2022. The next step in data transparency will be ensuring that the Secretariat, which includes 12 member entities, can begin publishing data according to the International Aid Transparency Initiative data standard, following the example of the agencies, funds and programmes. To do so and as part of the second phase of the Data Strategy, each United Nations entity, department and office will need to advance its own data-driven transformation tailored to its unique purpose, challenges and opportunities by creating data teams, investing in data programming and building internal capacity.

210. It is regrettable, however, that, according to the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, two in five entities have not yet requested their country offices to report through UN-Info. In some cases, agencies were not yet able to make their data collection systems interoperable. This effort is urgent and critical to enhancing transparency in our support to the 2030 Agenda. I am determined to continue to work with principals across the United Nations development system to ensure that, in the course of 2022, the system responds fully to the request in resolution 76/4 for entities to invest in, and fully utilize, the UN-Info reporting platform.

System-wide evaluation

211. The United Nations development system has made further progress in fulfilling its funding compact commitments and responding to the 2020 quadrennial review. There was an encouraging drive to advance joint and system-wide evaluations and improvement of the quality of evaluations of the Cooperation Frameworks at the country level. A total of 87 per cent of United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities are now making their corporate evaluations centrally available on the United Nations Evaluation Group website, and 22 of 25 entities are reporting that their evaluation functions meet the United Nations Evaluation Group standards. Engagement in joint evaluations has also improved considerably, with 80 per cent of United Nations Sustainable Development Group evaluation offices engaging in joint evaluations in 2021. A major focus of 2021 was the roll-out of strengthened evaluation of Cooperation Frameworks. In 2021, 40 countries (18 in Africa, 2 in the Arab States region, 9 in Asia and the Pacific, 5 in Europe and Central Asia and 6 in Latin America and the Caribbean) started their evaluations, and 30 are now considered completed. This work was further supported by, inter alia, the publication of Cooperation

Framework evaluation guidelines developed jointly by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Development Coordination Office and a global training workshop targeting countries to be evaluated in 2022 and quality control consultants.

212. As we continue to build on this progress, we are now also well advanced in establishing the United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office, which will help to strengthen transparency and accountability and enable continual enhancement of the collective United Nations contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. The rationale, functions and capacities of the Office were laid out in my report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and further developed in my subsequent reports in follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It is also the result of a comprehensive consultation process involving the Joint Inspection Unit, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the United Nations Evaluation Group. Through the consultations, critical gaps were identified in the current oversight mechanisms that prevent the Secretary-General and Member States from obtaining a complete picture of the overall performance of the United Nations development system support to Sustainable Development Goal implementation. These included a lack of evaluation of the system's collective support to the Goals, a lack of clear institutional function and leadership for evaluations of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks/Cooperation Frameworks, and the absence of an institutional mechanism to discuss system-wide strategic implications from evaluations. The new System-wide Evaluation Office is designed to fill in these gaps and to be complementary to the mandates and functions of the Joint Inspection Unit, OIOS and the independent evaluation offices of United Nations development system entities. As part of these consultations, the United Nations Evaluation Group provided a draft system-wide evaluation policy that formed the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendations for the System-wide Evaluation Office.

213. In previous reports, I proposed a lean office headed by a Director at the D-2 level, supported by a small team, reporting directly to me and having the prerogative to share reports directly with the Economic and Social Council. Member States supported my proposal in resolution 72/279 and reiterated their support in subsequent resolutions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In accordance with resolution 35/217, in 2021 I sought the approval of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the creation of the position of Director to head the System-wide Evaluation Office, for a two-year period from extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee approved the establishment of the position of Director for one year. The Committee further expressed the view that a proposal for the Office and the position of Director should be included in the proposed programme budget for 2023. While Member States were informed in earlier reports to the Economic and Social Council that the system-wide evaluation capacity would be financed from extrabudgetary resources, the capacity could be included in the next budget proposal if Member States were agreeable.

214. In 2021, a transitional team provided evaluation capacity support to the resident coordinator system while the System-wide Evaluation Office is being established. The transitional team and the Office have already provided valuable recommendations, for example as part of the early lessons and evaluability assessment report on the COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund published in 2021,⁹ as well as the interim report on the system-wide evaluation of the United Nations development system response to COVID-19 published in March

⁹ Available at https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf.

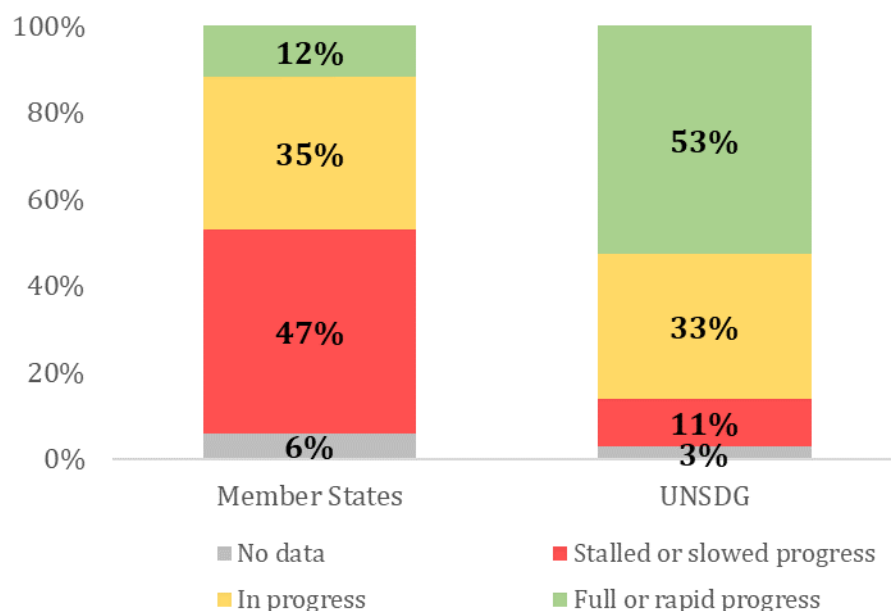
2022.¹⁰ In addition, an evaluation of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund has also been initiated and is expected to be finalized by June 2022. One of the first tasks of the Director upon appointment will be to finalize a system-wide evaluation policy in consultation with members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and evaluation offices across the system, including the United Nations Evaluation Group. I will continue to keep Member States apprised of these developments.

D. Delivering on funding compact commitments with full funding for the resident coordinator system

215. The commitments made by Member States and the United Nations development system in the funding compact in 2019 are critical to bringing about the transformative and collaborative action needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The funding compact called for a significant change in funding patterns to more predictable, quality and sustainable funding. At the same time, it set out a series of commitments from the United Nations development system to more transparency and accountability for its spending and more effective and efficient use of its limited resources. Such shifts are interdependent and mutually reinforcing: progress on each side enables progress on all.

216. After three years, Member States and the United Nations development system have made significant progress on some important priorities of the funding compact. However, considerable work lies ahead: while there was progress on 86 per cent of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group commitments in the past year, the comparable share for Member States was 47 per cent (see figure 26).

Figure 26
Progress on funding compact commitments



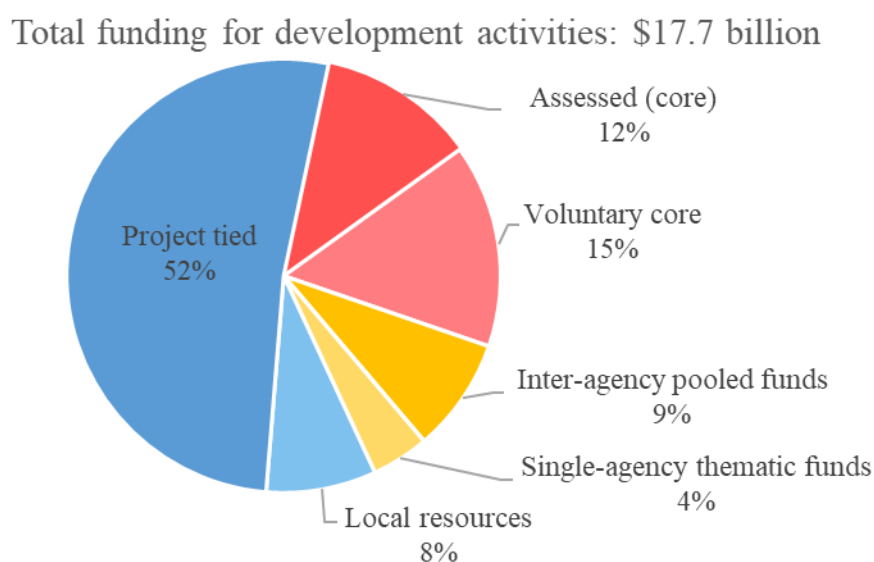
Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

Abbreviation: UNSDG, United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

¹⁰ Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/interim-report-system-wide-evaluation-unds-response-covid-19>.

217. Total financial contributions for operational activities for development in 2020 amounted to \$42.4 billion, a significant increase of 16 per cent over 2019. This included \$17.7 billion in funding for development-related activities and \$24.7 billion for humanitarian activities. The remainder of the present section is focused on development activities, the focus of the funding compact (see figure 27).

Figure 27
Types and volumes of funding, 2020



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

218. It is concerning that no progress has been made towards the 30 per cent target for core funding. In 2020, total core contributions accounted for just 27 per cent of funding (see figure 28).

Figure 28
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)	17.2% (2020)	
MS 1.2. Core share of funding for development-related activities (including assessed contributions)	27.0% (2017)	30% (2023)	26.9% (2020)	

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

219. When considering only voluntary (non-assessed funding), the figure dropped to 17.2 per cent, a decrease from 2019 (19.6 per cent). Project-tied, non-core resources still accounted for over half of all funding.

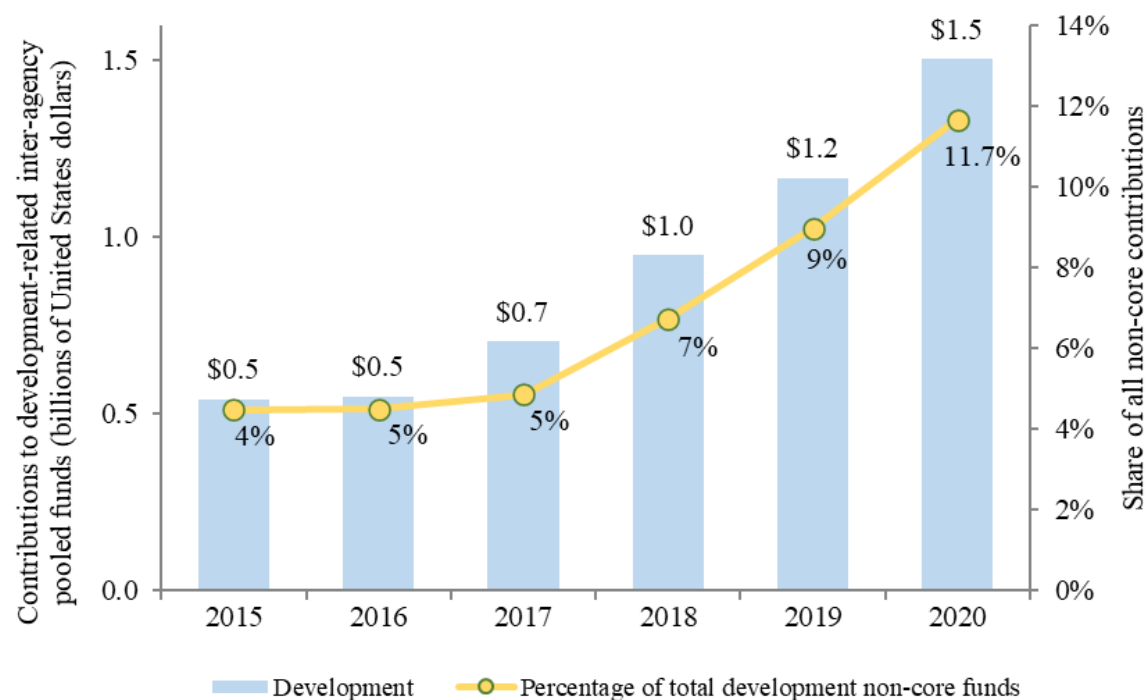
220. Core funding is essential to ensuring that United Nations development system entities have the flexibility to adapt their programmes to evolving needs and priorities. It proved indispensable as the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, allowing the

United Nations development system to repurpose funds rapidly to address the impact of the pandemic.

221. It is encouraging, on the other hand, that funding to inter-agency pooled funds continued to increase this year, channelling 11.7 per cent of all non-core funding for development activities, narrowly surpassing the funding compact target of 10 per cent, with contributions to development-related inter-agency funds totalling \$1.5 billion, an increase of 29 per cent over the previous year and 178 per cent higher than in 2015 (see figure 29).

Figure 29

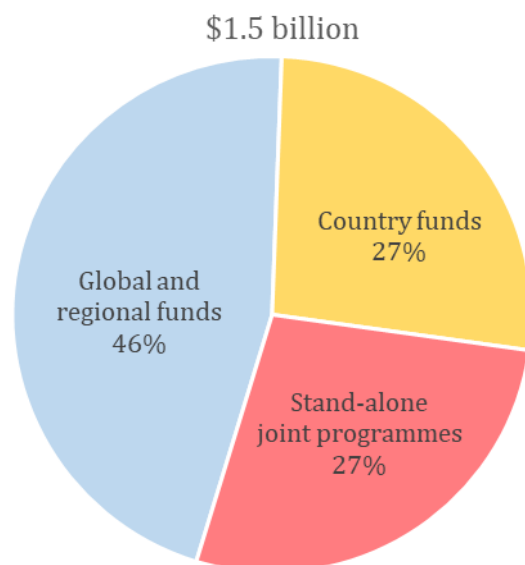
Volumes and shares of development-related non-core funding channelled through inter-agency pooled funds, 2015–2020



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022, and United Nations inter-agency pooled funds database, 2021.

222. Contributions to global and regional funds, the most common types of inter-agency pooled funds, were 72 per cent higher in 2020 compared with 2019 (see figure 30). They accounted for 46 per cent of all resources to inter-agency pooled funds.

Figure 30
Funding of development-related inter-agency pooled funds, by type, 2020



Source: United Nations inter-agency pooled funds database, 2021.

223. This growth was driven in part by a 44 per cent increase in commitments to the Peacebuilding Fund between 2019 and 2021, which reached \$195 million – still short, however, of the \$500 million target of the funding compact and far short of meeting growing development-related needs (see figure 31).

Figure 31
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 funds	5.0% (2017)	10.0% (2023)	11.7% (2020)	
MS 2.2. Percentage of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through single-agency thematic funds	2.6% (2017)	6.0% (2023)	5.9% (2020)	
MS 2.3. Annual capitalization of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund	\$43 million (2018)	\$290 million (2020)	\$79 million (2021)	
MS 2.4. Annual contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund	\$129 million (2018)	\$500 million (2020)	\$195 million (2021)	

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

224. The flagship Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund has catalysed an estimated \$1.7 billion in financing for the Goals since its inception in 2018. Contributions increased by 85 per cent between 2020 and 2021 to reach \$79 million. This is an important achievement and a testament to Member States' growing confidence in the results achieved by the Fund. However, it remains well short of the

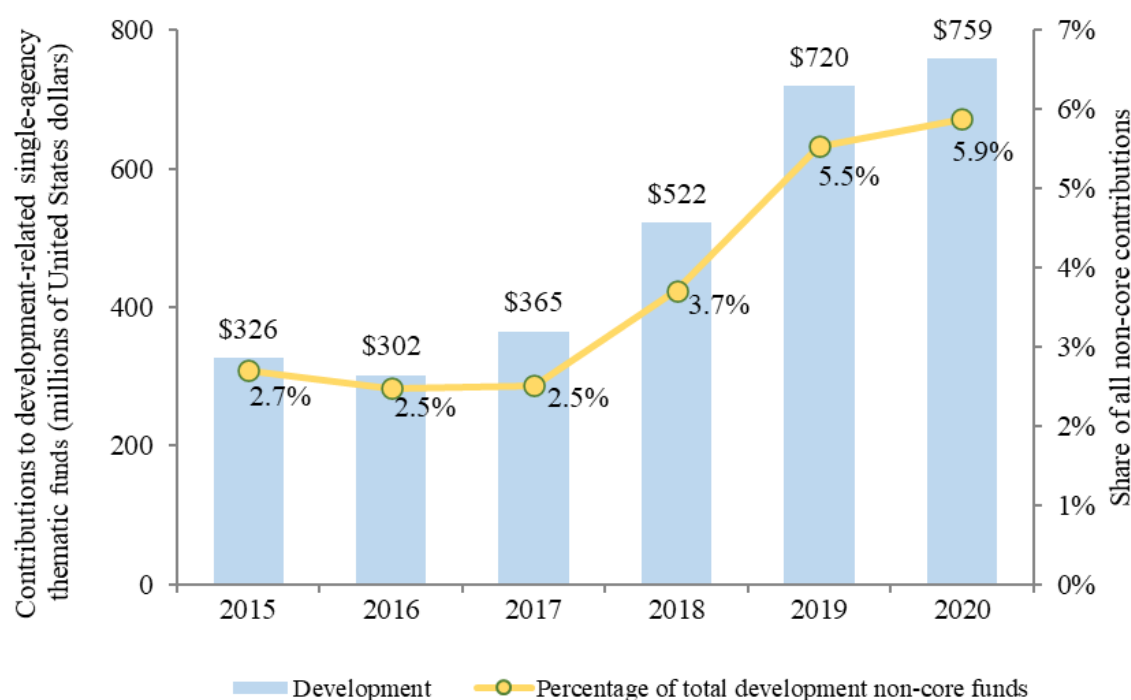
annual \$290 million funding compact target, and I reiterate my call for Member States to prioritize funding to this critical enabler for the reforms.

225. United Nations country-level pooled funds, used by United Nations country teams to galvanize joint action agreed in Cooperation Frameworks, saw an 11 per cent increase from 2019.

226. I am also encouraged by continued progress on Member States' commitment to channel more of their non-core funding to single-agency thematic funds. Such contributions doubled in the past three years to reach \$759 million, equivalent to 5.9 per cent of all non-core contributions (see figure 32) and just shy of the 6 per cent funding compact target.

Figure 32

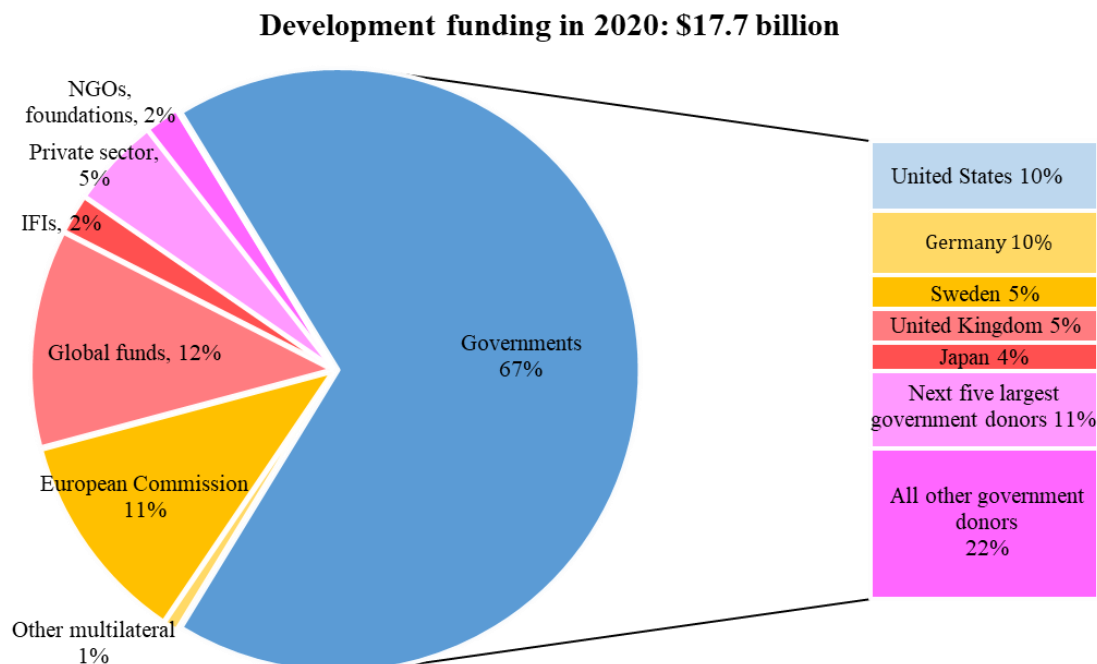
Volume and share of non-core funding to single-agency thematic funds



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

227. The United Nations development system continues to rely on a small number of contributors for most of its development-related funding (see figure 33). Two thirds of funding comes directly from Governments, and half of this amount comes from five contributing countries (Germany, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America).

Figure 33
Main sources of funding for development activities, 2020

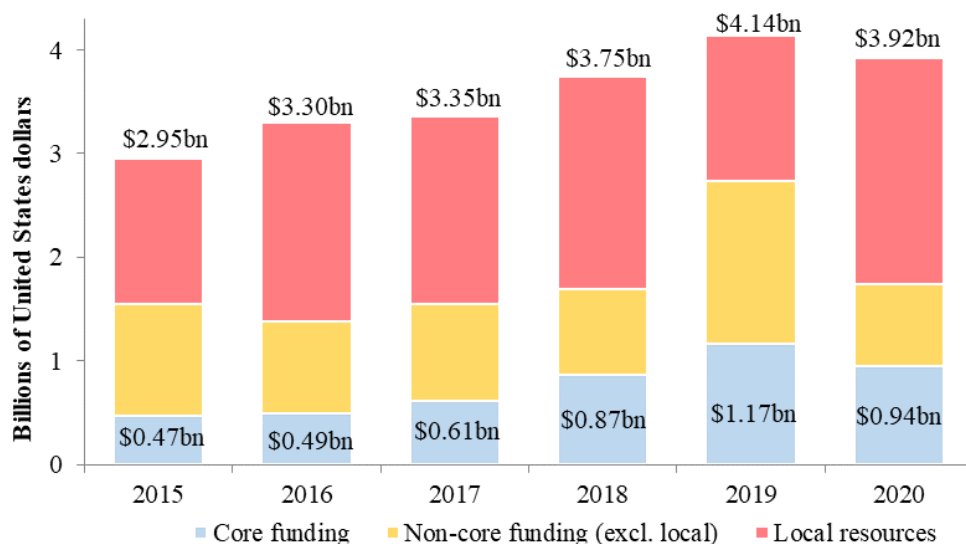


Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

Abbreviations: IFIs, international financial institutions; NGOs, non-governmental organizations.

228. Funding from programme countries helps to alleviate some of the high dependency of the United Nations development system on its top donors (see figure 34). Despite the severe impact of the pandemic on their economies, the contributions of programme countries remain stable (\$3.9 billion in 2020, from \$4.1 billion in 2019), representing an overall increase of 33 per cent between 2015 and 2020). In addition, contributions of local resources for programming in contributors' own countries amounted to \$2.1 billion in 2020, or 5 per cent of all contributions to the United Nations development system, marking a very significant increase of 55 per cent since 2015.

Figure 34
Funding from programme countries, 2015–2020



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022.

Note: The data include funding provided to United Nations humanitarian activities.

229. Funding from sources other than Governments, making up one third of the funding for development activities, also saw an important increase in 2021. The European Commission contributed \$2 billion in 2020, a 49 per cent increase over the previous year, and funding from global vertical funds more than doubled, now constituting 12 per cent of all resources for development activities.

230. A less positive picture emerged from the international financial institutions. Contributions fell 44 per cent to \$372 million in 2020, despite increased engagement in a number of areas, including financing for the COVID-19 recovery.

Funding the resident coordinator system

231. In the resolution on the review of the resident coordinator system, it is clear that delivering on Member States' expectations will require the resident coordinator system to be fully funded, with its core capacities preserved. While I had recommended changes to the funding model in response to budget shortfalls in recent years, I was encouraged by Member States' collective determination to make the current arrangements, based on a combination of voluntary contributions, United Nations development system entities cost-sharing and a contribution levy, deliver the \$281 million budget required for the proper functioning of the resident coordinator system.

232. The report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group provides further details on funding performance in 2021. As in previous years, the Group's entities continued to pay their cost-sharing in full (\$77.5 million). It was also encouraging to see a slight increase in voluntary contributions, from \$86 million to \$98 million, and the levy at a similar level as the previous year (\$39 million). Once again, however, the funding, at \$215 million, falls short of needs. This shortfall, in addition to a narrowing of the donor base, creates a significant cash flow dilemma and causes uncertainty that affects United Nations operations on the ground.

233. I will continue to do everything in my power to deliver on our collective expectations for a fully funded budget and to engage with Member States to ensure

that the voluntary portion of the budget is fully met and strengthens predictability. At the request of Member States, I will closely monitor the performance of the funding model in the next year and will revert if necessary on the matter of the regular budget or the previously presented hybrid 2.0 options for Member States' consideration.

E. Implementing key strategies for United Nations development system operations

Achieving gender parity at all levels of the United Nations development system

234. Gender parity within the United Nations development system remains one of my top priorities, guided by the system-wide strategy on gender parity. We have further consolidated our progress in 2022, with gender parity maintained among Under-Secretaries-General and in resident coordinator appointments, and women comprising 58.3 per cent of heads and deputy heads of peace operations (28 out of 48 encumbered positions) in 2021, a new record. My recent report on the status of women in the United Nations system (A/76/115) details specific successes, including more enabling work environments and active support from senior leadership. It also details remaining challenges, such as difficulties in attracting and retaining female talent to field and hardship locations and the limited number of posts and inadequate career development for mid-level staff. The report also includes concrete recommendations on how to advance progress, including robust accountability mechanisms, the adoption of temporary special measures, the appointment of gender focal points and the development of internal talent pipelines and strategic succession planning.

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations development system

235. United Nations country teams continued to take important actions related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2021, ensuring compliance on mandatory training, establishing and/or strengthening risk management and mitigation strategies, and mechanisms to report allegations. The number of United Nations country action plans on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse increased from 119 in 2020 to 126 in 2021. Dedicated inter-agency task forces, coordination mechanisms and/or focal points in the country teams expanded from 119 to 127, with the goal to achieve a 100 per cent rate for both measures in 2022. Under the leadership of the Victims' Rights Advocate, progress also continues in integrating a victims' rights approach to policies and procedures across the United Nations system, including through engagement with resident coordinators and dedicated networks in all regions. A methodology to gather feedback from victims on the quality and appropriateness of the assistance received will be piloted in the coming months.

236. That said, we remain far from reaching our goal of eliminating all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, as I stated in my most recent annual report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. I call upon all leaders at the entity, regional and country levels, including resident coordinators and my special representatives, to fast-track action towards reaching this common goal, in line with our strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel.

Advancing the environmental sustainability of United Nations operational activities for development

237. Accurately mapping and reducing the environmental footprint of global United Nations operations has been a long-standing goal, supported since 2007 by the Greening the Blue initiative. In 2020, parameters on carbon emissions, waste

production and water consumption saw declines compared with 2019,¹¹ due mainly to pandemic-induced changes to operations. As the Organization reimagines the “next normal” for its operation, there is an important opportunity to revisit activities with high environmental impacts, such as international flights and in-person meetings, and to accelerate progress in the Organization in implementing the green transition we call for.

238. So far, progress in reducing the system’s environmental footprint has been slow and uneven. On the positive side, 99 per cent of United Nations greenhouse gas emissions are already offset, but we can do more to reduce the absolute level of emissions. Similarly, it is a positive development that 29 United Nations development system entities reporting to Greening the Blue have publicly disclosed their efforts to reduce their climate and environmental footprint, although only 13 of 27 entities confirmed having greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in place in 2020.

239. Phase I of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System, 2020–2030, adopted in 2019, provides an overarching approach to incorporating environmental considerations across United Nations operations, including a key commitment to develop entity-specific environmental management systems and, importantly, a framework to drive accountability across the system. In 2020, only 1 entity had an environmental management system that met the requirements outlined in the strategy, and 10 were approaching the requirements. Additional training and compendiums of best practices are planned for 2022 and 2023 to support the implementation of the strategy. Another key commitment of the strategy relates to environmental and social safeguards, which 17 out of 27 entities integrated into policies, programmes and projects in 2020.

240. Phase II of the Strategy, adopted in 2021, sets out ambitious plans for the United Nations system towards full internal environmental and social sustainability across policies, programming, facilities and operations by 2030. A scorecard for entities to monitor implementation will be developed in 2022, piloted in 2023 and rolled out to all entities in 2024. I am counting on all entities to more rapidly incorporate environmental considerations to operate within planetary boundaries.

V. Conclusion

241. The COVID-19 crisis shone a spotlight on international cooperation and exposed its grave shortcomings, from vaccine inequity to a lack of financial solidarity. Developing countries are struggling to recover, with record inflation, rising interest rates, looming debt burdens and exponential increases in the cost of financing. In addition, the impact of the conflict in Ukraine is now supercharging a three-dimensional crisis of food, energy and finance that is devastating lives and livelihoods even more.

242. We are moving in the wrong direction. Overcoming these crises will require us to reverse the tide. We need to re-embrace global solidarity and find new ways to work together for the global good. The silver lining is that the world already has a plan that could help to turn these multiple crises into an opportunity to change course. The Sustainable Development Goals remain our blueprint for action, with Our Common Agenda offering recommendations to support a much-needed acceleration of our efforts so that we can rescue the Goals by 2030. The pathway ahead is clearer than ever: only through decisive action to unblock transitions on energy and food systems and in the digital domain and finance can we accelerate progress across all

¹¹ United Nations Environment Programme, *Greening the Blue Report* (Geneva, 2021).

Goals in a way that puts us back on track and keeps the promise of leaving no one behind.

243. The United Nations development system is ready to support Member States in activating these transitions at this pivotal moment for people and the planet. I am humbled to see that the appreciation by Governments of the performance of the repositioned United Nations development system increases year-on-year and that it is matched with positive feedback from contributing Governments and United Nations country teams. This provides validation that our collective efforts are bearing fruit and that the repositioned United Nations development system has built a solid foundation and is now delivering concrete results on the priorities set out in the 2020 quadrennial review.

244. This gives us solid ground to increase the ambition and scale required of us two years into the decade of action. Building on these achievements, learning from the challenges that the present report has highlighted, and addressing the additional mandates provided in the review of the resident coordinator system have opened a clear path ahead to deliver on the expectations conveyed in the 2020 quadrennial review.

245. We need all hands on deck. I am committed to making every effort to continue to guide United Nations development system support to meet the ambition of the 2030 Agenda, relying on the expert support of the entities in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. In turn, we need the strategic guidance and support of Member States to harness the benefits of the reform to support countries' just transitions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

246. I look forward to continuing this transformative journey, hand in hand with entities across the United Nations development system and at the service of countries and peoples. I count on Member States to continue to provide steadfast support to our reform efforts, as set out in the resolution on the review of the resident coordinator system, including in the areas where the resolution provided further impetus to our action. This includes further improvements to the resident coordinators' career path; the full implementation of the dual reporting model and the management and accountability framework; greater transparency and results reporting; and a step change in the United Nations development system integrated offer, catalysing partnerships at the country level, including with international financial institutions and the private sector.

247. I am committed to providing Member States with the additional accountability tools needed to further enhance their oversight of the United Nations development system. The Economic and Social Council will be able to rely on the annual updates against results in the revised quadrennial comprehensive policy review framework and the results framework for the resident coordinator system, when finalized. In addition, the System-wide Evaluation Office will have the authority to bring to the Council recommendations and evaluative evidence on the performance of the United Nations development system in supporting countries in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the dual reporting model and the guidance of Member States in the resolution on the review of the resident coordinator system, the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group will make available to the governing bodies of the United Nations development system entities a United Nations development system reform checklist and a self-reporting scorecard on the implementation of the dual accountability function, to help to reinforce those bodies' oversight of the reform efforts. On our end, we will also continuously review the tools at the disposal of the United Nations development system, including the management and accountability framework, to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

248. Our collective efforts can materialize into results at the daunting scale needed, but only with a breakthrough in the implementation of our respective commitments in the funding compact, to once and for all align sustainable development goals and priorities with the financing and funding allocated to them. We are committed to holding our end of the bargain, with a more efficient, transparent and results-oriented United Nations development system. I urge Member States to build on the solid progress made in recent years in giving greater priority to joint funding initiatives, in order to bring the catalytic funding that we need to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. The full funding of the resident coordinator system, to which Member States committed in resolution [76/4](#), is an imperative in that regard.

249. Most importantly, I count on Member States and stakeholders across all sectors to stay focused and determined, because the multiple challenges that we face can be overcome only through more ambition, not less; with a greater sense of urgency, not complacency; and through greater transformation, not the status quo. Together, we can do it.
