



**DELIVERING ON THE
2030 AGENDA:
OUR PROMISE FOR
DIGNITY, PROSPERITY
AND PEACE ON A
HEALTHY PLANET**

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REPOSITIONING

Backgrounder

Meeting the SDG Challenge: Changing the way the UN works to deliver results

When the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the forward-looking and transformative 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, they recognized that countries and the international community—including the UN itself—would have to adopt major changes and reforms if the far-reaching Goals were ever to be achieved. The 2030 Agenda is an imperative for change. Its soaring ambition—to ensure peace and prosperity for all on a healthy planet—requires equally bold changes across the United Nations.

Overview

In late 2016 the General Assembly provided guidance for repositioning the UN to enhance its cohesion and maximize its capacities and capabilities to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In responding to the General Assembly, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has presented an ambitious package of proposals through two consecutive reports in June and December 2017, anchored in three guiding principles: reinforcing national ownership; developing country-contextual responses; and ensuring effective delivery of development results on the ground.

“The 2030 Agenda is our boldest agenda for humanity, and requires equally bold changes in the UN development system,” the Secretary-General said as he rolled out his vision and proposals for change.

“The UN development system has a proud history of delivering results,” he added. “Across the decades, it has generated ideas and solutions that have changed the world for millions of the poorest and most vulnerable people on earth.”

But to help countries implement the 2030 Agenda—the Secretary-General envisioned a major repositioning of the development system, through significant adjustments in the organizational arrangements, skillsets, leadership, as well as coordination and accountability mechanisms of the UN development system.

On 31 May 2018, the General Assembly welcomed the Secretary-General’s ambitious vision and decided on pivotal measures for change along the lines of the package of proposals offered by the Secretary-General, in a landmark resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system. This has ushered in the most comprehensive reform of the United Nations development system in decades. It has also set the foundations to reposition sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations, and gave practical meaning to our collective promise to advance the Sustainable Development Goals for everyone, everywhere.

An urgency for change

With global tensions rising and conflicts escalating, climate impacts growing, and migration and xenophobia increasing, there is an urgency for action—the SDGs offer the best option for dealing with these global challenges in a holistic manner.

Much is happening around the world as governments and civil society are drafting or redrafting development plans to align with the SDGs. But the UN, to remain relevant and provide support at the scale required, needs to reposition itself. “Ultimately, this is about ensuring we are positioned to better deliver for people,” the Secretary-General has noted.

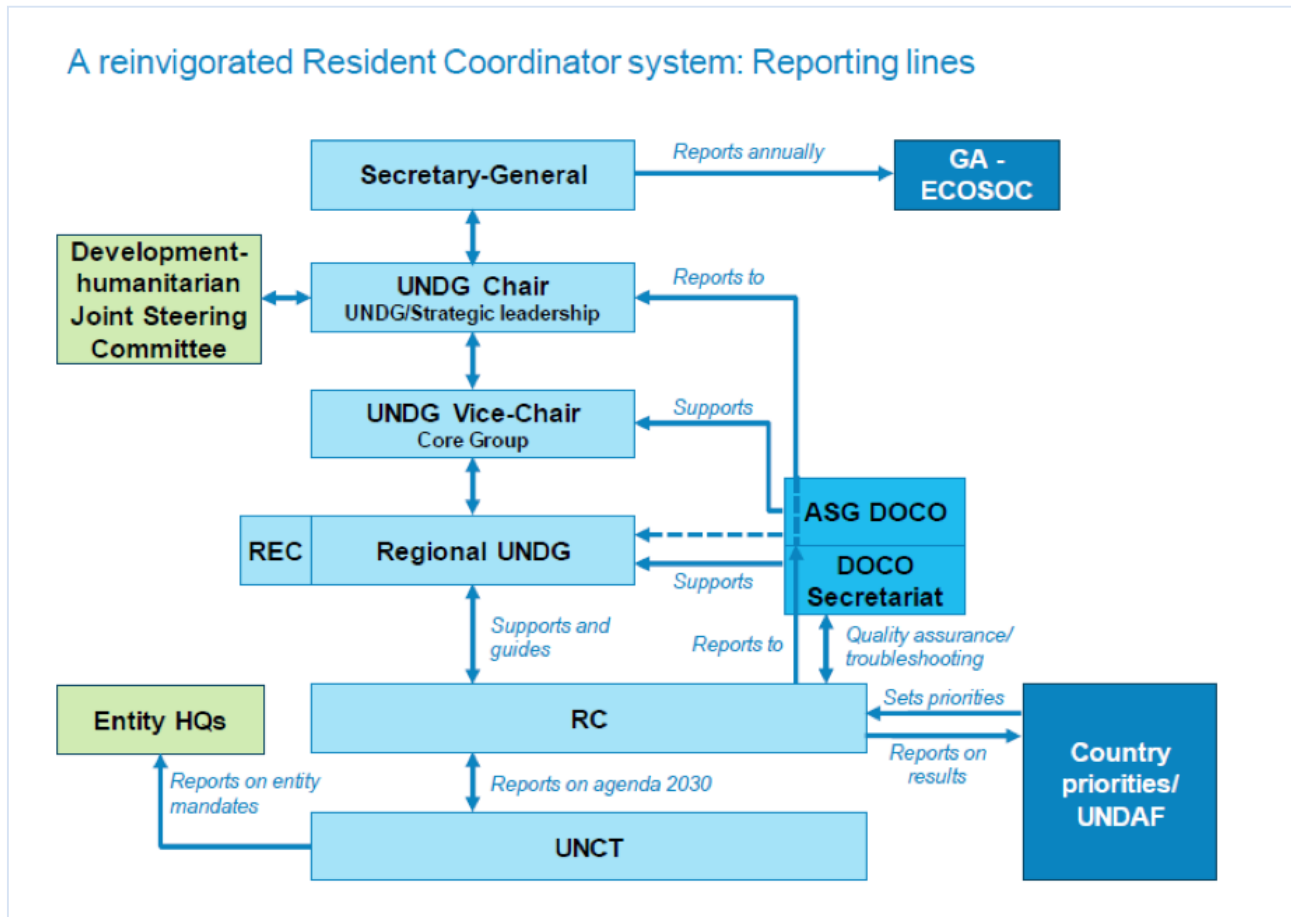
The UN development system is at a pivotal moment. Across the world, there is strengthen-

ing momentum behind the SDGs, as civil society support grows, the private sector recognizes the benefits of engaging, and more and more leaders put their political weight behind the 2030 Agenda, which has so much potential for so many people. Almost three years in, there is no time to lose in re-shaping the United Nations’ capacity to deliver.

An approach geared for achieving the 2030 Agenda

The repositioning of the UN development system will ensure the system can provide the assistance that countries are asking for—and that people need—in the most effective and efficient possible manner.

This requires a suite of changes in the way things are done, from the field level to UN Headquarters:



At the country level: A new generation of UN country teams, centered around a strategic country plan—developed in close consultation with governments—and led by an impartial, independent and empowered UN Resident Coordinator will allow Member States to guide system-wide actions and bring greater transparency and accountability for results, underpinned by robust independent system-wide evaluations. Country Teams will provide greater cohesion, accountability and leadership and will maximize opportunities for interagency planning and the establishment of common back offices for operational and administrative functions. Members of the UN Country Teams will report to both their agencies and the Resident Coordinators.

At the regional level: A coordinated, reprofiled and restructured regional approach will fully support the work on the ground. The regional level must offer a convening platform and deliver integrated policy advice, normative and technical support on regional priorities. Reprofiling and repositioning the work of our Regional Economic Commissions is therefore a priority, as well as strengthening the linkages between these Commissions and the broader UN family at the regional and country levels.

Funding: A Funding Compact will bring better quality, quantity and predictability of resources in exchange for accelerated repositioning and enhanced capacities of the system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, with increased transparency and accountability for results. Specific targets of mutual accountability are being defined in a dialogue with Member States, to offer a realistic way to start reversing the funding trends that have led to a highly-fragmented funding base of the UN development system.

Partnership: Steps will also be taken for a stronger UN institutional response and system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030

Agenda. An immediate priority will be strengthening the capacity of UN country teams and teams at headquarters responsible for partnerships to step up the organization's engagement with civil society, the private sector, international financial institutions and others. Partnerships will make or break the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations capacities need to reflect this reality.

Accountability: While primary accountability remains at the country-level, between the UN country teams and host governments, improving multi-lateral oversight of system-wide activities of the UN development system is essential. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and entity Executive Boards are working to strengthen and ensure coherent decision-making and guidance for collective action by the UN development system.

What is next?

The UN development system is moving forward with the implementation of all mandates of the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The full change process could be completed within two to four years. Critical aspects of the repositioning process—including the establishment of a new generation of UN Country Teams and reinvigorated RC system—will be operational in 2019.

The transition period is being designed to ensure that the change process is smooth and well sequenced and minimizes disruption. It will be an open and transparent process, in consultation with Member States, UN entities and other stakeholders. The Secretary-General will report to the Economic and Social Council on the progress at the 2019 ECOSOC Segment on Operational Activities and to the 74th session of the General Assembly. He will also lead on the development of an implementation plan for the new Resident Coordinator system, which will be presented to Member States by mid-September 2018.