



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 March 2020

Original: English

2020 session

25 July 2019–22 July 2020

Agenda item 7 (a)

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

Development Coordination Office

Report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group

Summary

2019 was a watershed year for United Nations development coordination. Following the landmark resolution [72/279](#) of May 2018, by which the General Assembly decided to fundamentally transform the United Nations development system to better respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a truly empowered and independent resident coordinator system was launched on 1 January 2019. Across 162 countries and territories, resident coordinators are now fully dedicated to coordinating country-level development activities, with a direct reporting line to the Secretary-General, strengthened independence and authority over the activities of United Nations country teams, enhanced analytical capacities in their offices, and dedicated backstopping from new regional development coordination offices of and a stand-alone global Development Coordination Office.

The report presented to the Economic and Social Council in 2019 covered only the first three months of the new resident coordinator system and Development Coordination Office operations. The present report marks the first annual account of progress. It encompasses key pillars defining the success of United Nations support to national Governments, including: empowered, impartial and full-time development coordination leadership; integrated United Nations policy and programming responses; and innovative partnerships to advance the 2030 Agenda, all backed by quality funding, efficient operations and effective communications to ensure full transparency and accountability for results. Data were collected through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system, which reflects United Nations country team inputs channelled through resident coordinator offices, as well as Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of programme country Governments and resident coordinators. Resident coordinators were expected



to consult with United Nations country team members on relevant questions of the Department's survey.

Early signs are promising. Enhanced coordination is beginning to yield results. Almost all United Nations country teams (95 per cent) report that a joint approach has strengthened their relationships with Governments.¹ The collective offer is better defined, more accessible and more attuned to needs on the ground. Two thirds of programme country Governments indicate that resident coordinators have shown increased capacity to support national development priorities.² Over half (56 per cent) also state that resident coordinators have made United Nations activities more coherent and helped reduce duplication.³

Organizational culture is also gradually shifting to embrace greater cooperation and collaboration. All United Nations country teams report that they have changed activities in response to reforms, highlighting improved joint planning and joint programme implementation.⁴ Three quarters of resident coordinators (75 per cent) state that there is greater access to United Nations development system expertise to address specific national needs, priorities and challenges.⁵ Over 90 per cent agree that United Nations country teams see the resident coordinator office as a common resource for analysis, policy and programming.⁶ Close to three quarters affirm that the Development Coordination Office has provided adequate support in rolling-out structural changes and new coordination instruments.⁷

Given the extent of the structural and cultural overhaul, some challenges remain. The true impact, in terms of Sustainable Development Goal achievement, will require time. But the transformation journey has begun, and the United Nations reform spirit is already infusing the immediate and longer-term response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) crisis. Resident coordinators are bringing together United Nations assets behind the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and will be at the forefront of the coordinated, multi-agency, multisectoral-approach required to face the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis.

The present report should be read in tandem with the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system ([A/75/79-E/2020/55](#)). The two chronicle progress in making the United Nations development system fit to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. At 75, the United Nations is embracing change, united in its renewed commitment to a better organization and a better world.

¹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

² Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) 2019 survey of programme country Governments.

³ Ibid.

⁴ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

⁵ DESA 2019 survey of resident coordinators.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Introduction: an empowered and successful resident coordinator system to deliver on the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals

1. On 1 January 2019, a new United Nations development coordination era began. A reinvigorated resident coordinator system was rolled out, embodying the General Assembly vision for a dedicated, independent, impartial and empowered development coordination function. This change is fundamental as we start the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, and even more so in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis. The urgency is now twofold: to protect development gains and to accelerate action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

2. The new resident coordinator system has been at the heart of the reform, in response to the high ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review calls for a more cohesive, effective and efficient United Nations development system. Development coordination is now a full-time, impartial function; and resident coordinators have greater authority, capacities and tools. This transformation has helped shift the United Nations development system to a more integrated working model, making better use of expertise and assets at the global, regional and country levels, with greater accountability for results.

3. 2019 was a take-off year. Following the formal resident coordinator system transfer to the Secretariat, the focus was first on a smooth transition. Within three months, staff recruitment was initiated, legal and administrative arrangements established, and funding to kick-start operations mobilized. Staff at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Secretariat eased the shift, supported by Member States with funds and engagement through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Fifth Committee and the Economic and Social Council.

4. Within six months, new tools, instruments and platforms were operationalized to support the resident coordinator system, enhance accountability, boost transparency and enable new funding approaches. Guidance for a new common country analysis and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework was developed, a new internal management and accountability framework introduced, the funding compact agreed, the joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund operationalized and an online platform created to track contributions to the special purpose trust fund for the resident coordinator system. An overhaul of the United Nations country team and United Nations Sustainable Development Group websites began to showcase progress on reform.

5. One year later, structural changes are in place, with 87 per cent investments in development coordination targeting country-level functions and capacities. Resident coordinators are now fully dedicated to development coordination, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, connecting and catalysing United Nations country teams. Seventy-five per cent of positions in resident coordinator offices were filled by the time the present report went to print, with all others well advanced in the recruitment process. Regional development coordination offices have been established. The Development Coordination Office has carried out its own transition to a stand-alone office and is better equipped to support the resident coordinators. This has also been possible thanks to the strong operational support by UNDP for financial, human resources, general operations and administrative services for all resident coordinator offices and most regional development coordination offices. In some countries the longer-term host agreement to define the legal basis for resident coordinators and resident coordinator offices to operate is still being negotiated: it is

important to finalize this step soon, so as to focus operations on advancing the development agenda.

6. Concrete changes are taking shape. At the country level, full-time, empowered and independent resident coordinators are mobilizing United Nations country teams towards integrated planning and tailored responses. Advances include United Nations country team reconfiguration, better technical and policy resources pooling and more joint planning and programming. Teams are making increased use of joint communications, common business operations and greater collective mainstreaming of core norms and principles. At the regional level, newly established regional development coordination offices deliver country-level support tailored to each region's specificities.

7. Globally, improved coordination is bringing the system together around system-wide strategies to advance the 2030 Agenda. Support for development activities in countries is being enhanced through: increased investments in collective knowledge platforms; improved quality control for inter-agency analytical, planning and reporting products; more effective joint communications and advocacy; and increased transparency of development activities.

8. Enhanced coordination is also enhancing dialogue with Member States and constructive feedback on performance. It is fostering effective prioritization and decision-making, and more robust follow-up. It is facilitating a Sustainable Development Goal-centred whole-of-system alignment behind national priorities, including through resource mobilization and the establishment of pooled funds.

9. National Governments recognize that strengthened coordination is demonstrating visible benefits. Two thirds of programme country Governments indicate that, since 1 January 2019, resident coordinators have shown increased capacity to support national development priorities.⁸ Ninety-five per cent of United Nations country teams note changes in how they work with Governments.⁹ Over half report enhanced joint strategic planning.¹⁰ Partnerships and information-sharing are on the rise, and Governments are proactively engaging resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in national development discussions. Angola, China, Gabon, Papua New Guinea and Uzbekistan have upgraded the resident coordinators' diplomatic rank, for example, formally recognizing them as the highest-ranking United Nations development system representatives in the country, and allowing increased access to top Government officials, including Heads of State and Government.

10. The United Nations development system also appears to increasingly value improved coordination. A United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) survey of 112 country offices carried out in late 2019 reports not only greater abilities to engage in joint programming, but also to deliver on entity-specific mandates, position UNFPA issues more centrally, access Governments and enter into partnerships more easily, due to the resident coordinator's enhanced role as convener, broker and spokesperson for the entire United Nations country team. Specialized agencies also confirm greater engagement in United Nations country teams. Agencies with limited in-country presence are systematically offering expertise to increasingly accessible and open United Nations country teams.

11. The level, scope and pace of transformation vary across countries and regions, as covered extensively in the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

⁸ DESA 2019 survey of programme country Governments.

⁹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

¹⁰ Ibid.

(A/75/79-E/2020/55). While the direction is unambiguously positive, challenges remain. A first major test is the response to the COVID-19 pandemic immediate and long-standing socioeconomic consequences. Momentum must be maintained behind systemic cultural changes fully embracing the urgency of a more coherent, effective and efficient United Nations development system. The resident coordinator system must ensure that support aligns with country-specific needs. Priorities for 2020 include strengthening resident coordinator leadership and resident coordinator office capacities, introducing system-wide evaluation of collective planning and integrated responses and debuting new regional and global management and accountability frameworks, while continuing to consolidate transformation to date.

12. Success will be measured by improved, integrated policy advice, as the 2030 Agenda requires; increased programmatic results, including more effective cross-border and subregional responses; more efficient and agile operations; and greater transparency and accountability, refreshing the relationship with Member States and inspiring renewed commitment to multilateralism. Ultimately, the primary success measure will be the impact for people, planet and prosperity.

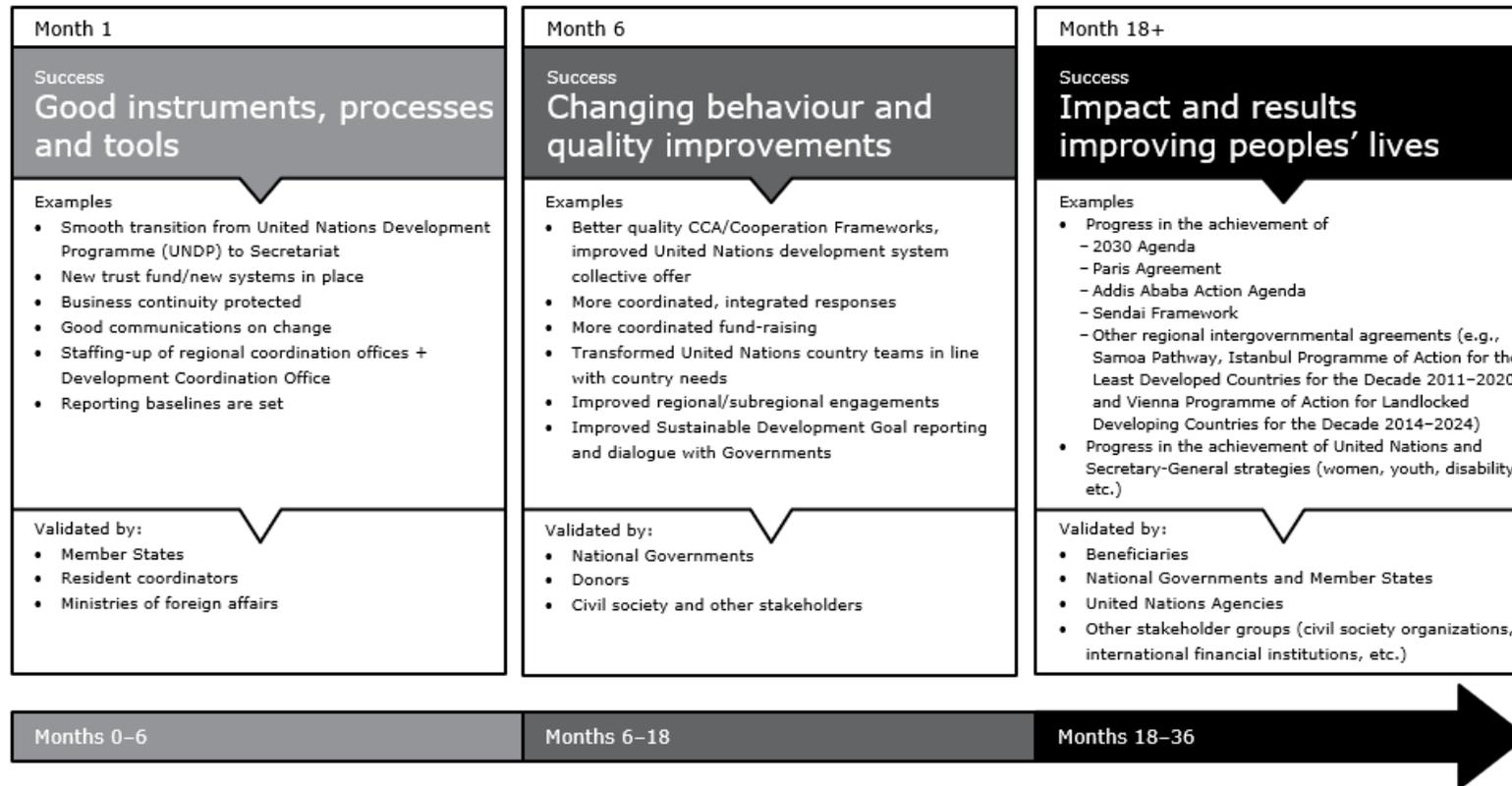
13. Member States will continue to guide the evolution of the United Nations development coordination architecture. Through the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the General Assembly will define the next road map for operational activities for development. The Economic and Social Council annual review will provide oversight and accountability for the resident coordinator system. The agencies, funds and programmes governing bodies will help the United Nations development system align individual corporate systems with General Assembly and Economic and Social Council guidance. At age 75, the United Nations has shifted gears, prepared as never before to act on the transformative ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and the promise to leave no one behind.

Figure I

What success looks like in the long run

Success in the long run				
Improved, integrated policy advice from a joined-up United Nations development system in line with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Increased programmatic results advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, made possible through enhanced collaboration	Better cross-border and subregional responses to today's development challenges that know no borders	Increased efficiencies to allow better service delivery and development gains	Renewed relationship with Member States through increased accountability and transparency

The above will take time: in the meantime, what can be offered



Leadership for sustainable development results: building resident coordinator system capabilities for the 2030 Agenda

Resident coordinator leadership to lift United Nations country team support for the Sustainable Development Goals

14. To enable the transformation of the United Nations development system, resident coordinators must be highly qualified leaders with a deep understanding of the conceptual shift of the 2030 Agenda and the implications for national planning, financing and implementation. They need to draw on expertise and assets from the entire United Nations and beyond to address Member States' development priorities. They need to lead United Nations country teams in integrated analysis and planning to accelerate results. They need to identify, enable and support innovative partnerships and solutions. They also need to be better equipped to ensure coherence between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions, especially where they also serve as humanitarian coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

15. The Secretary-General convened a second annual global resident coordinator meeting in November 2019 to reiterate his expectations and support for this higher ambition level. Resident coordinators reflected on their new role, challenges and opportunities with the Secretary-General, peers, other high-level officials and Member States.

16. The Development Coordination Office launched a series of initiatives to support resident coordinators throughout the year. To strengthen the common Sustainable Development Goal knowledge base, the Development Coordination Office partnered with UNDP to develop a Sustainable Development Goal primer, guided by the inter-agency Learning Advisory Council, chaired by the United Nations University. The United Nations System Staff College, together with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, developed a certification for resident coordinators and an e-course for all interested development practitioners and Member States.

17. The Development Coordination Office is also cultivating a diverse resident coordinator cohort and ensuring that resident coordinators meet enhanced expectations by helping incumbent resident coordinators to “shift gears” where necessary, building a robust, high-calibre resident coordinator candidates pool, revamping the selection system to identify those best suited for each country, proactively managing and supporting resident coordinators including through strengthened capacities and establishing new accountabilities as part of redefining resident coordinator relationship with United Nations country teams.

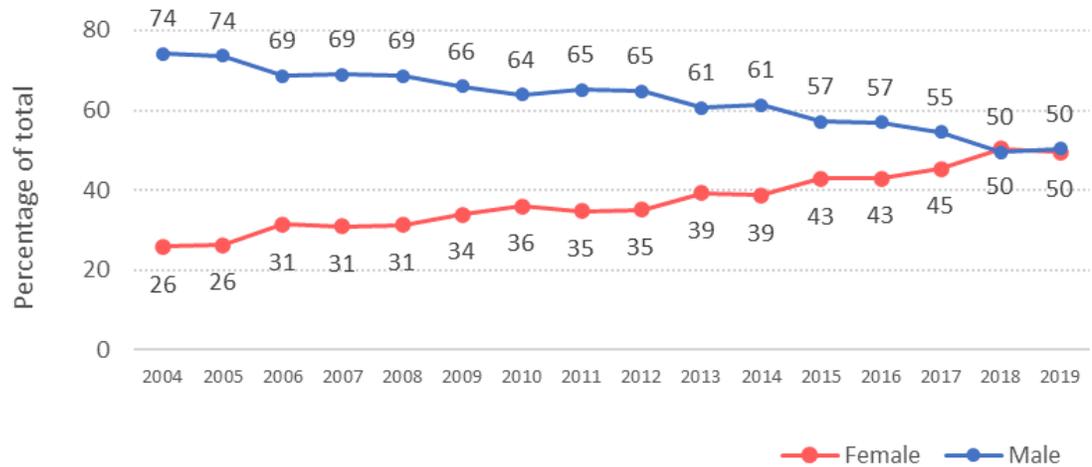
Building a high-calibre resident coordinator cohort to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

18. In 2019, the Development Coordination Office started mapping resident coordinator talent needs, over a five-year horizon, and identifying high-potential candidates within and beyond the United Nations system. Resident coordinator positions are now advertised 6–12 months in advance to ensure smooth transitions, while a retired resident coordinators roster provides senior expertise to fill unexpected vacancies.

19. In 2019, two resident coordinator recruitment rounds placed 25 new resident coordinators. The resident coordinator gender gap was closed in 2018. Geographic diversity improved from 41 per cent in 2018 to 46 per cent by March 2020. Diversity in resident coordinators' agency of origin also increased.

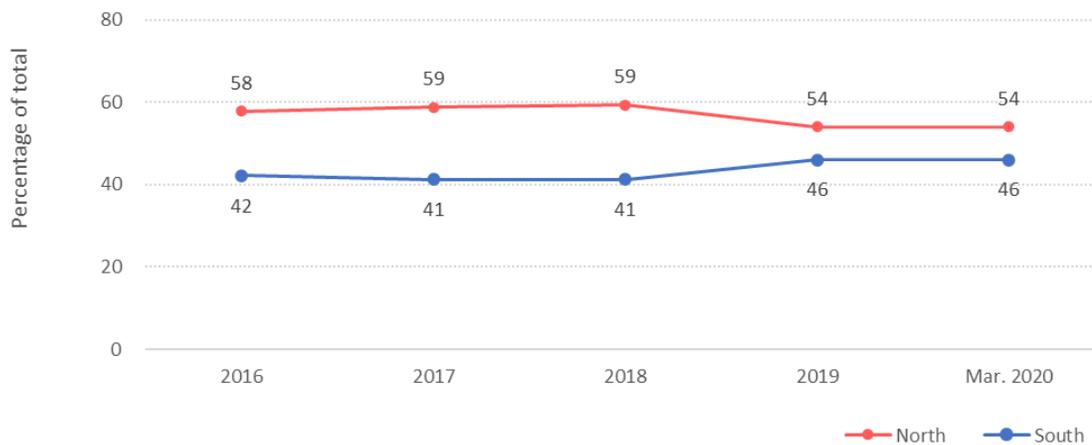
20. A resident coordinator selection system redesign, including the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre, is ongoing to ensure a resident coordinator pool that is equally diverse in gender, geography and skillsets. The Development Coordination Office and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have initiated a joint resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator talent pool to strengthen leadership for both development and humanitarian contexts.

Figure II
Currently designated resident coordinators by gender



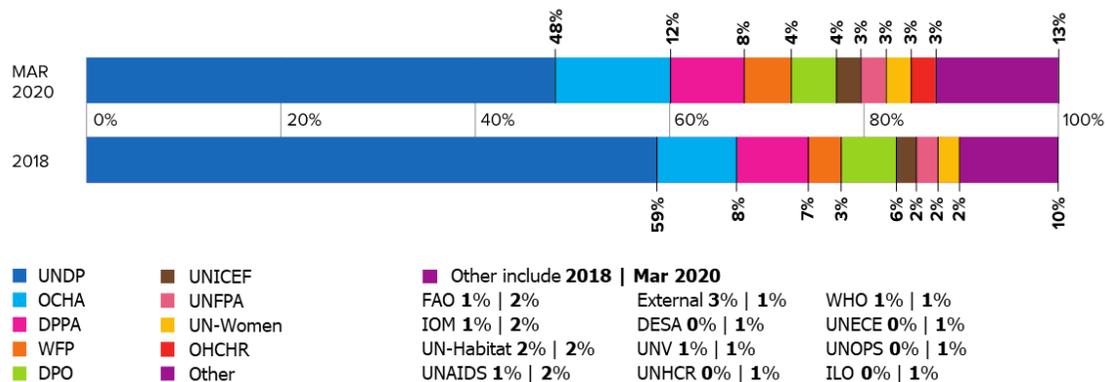
Source: Development Coordination Office.

Figure III
Currently designated resident coordinators by geographic origin



Source: Development Coordination Office.

Figure IV
Resident coordinators by United Nations agency of origin



Abbreviations: DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; DPO, Department of Peace Operations; DPPA, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ILO, International Labour Organization; IOM, International Organization for Migration; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; OHCHR, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNECE, Economic Commission for Europe; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlement Programme; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNOPS, United Nations Office for Project Services; UNV, United Nations Volunteers; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization.

21. The new leadership development strategy requires all incoming resident coordinators to attend country-specific briefings in New York with relevant stakeholders from the Secretariat, other United Nations entities and the host country permanent missions. First-time resident coordinators receive mentoring from former resident coordinators and executive coaching. In a five-day induction, they reflect on their role with United Nations partners.

22. A transitional resident coordinator performance appraisal system has been put in place as the foundation for a long-term plan to be introduced in 2021. Yearly appraisals draw on inputs from the regional team of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the host country and other partners in the country. A peer feedback tool will be piloted in 2020. The Secretary-General, henceforth, will make the final evaluation of all resident coordinators.

Reinvigorating resident coordinator offices to strengthen resident coordinator capacities and support United Nations country teams

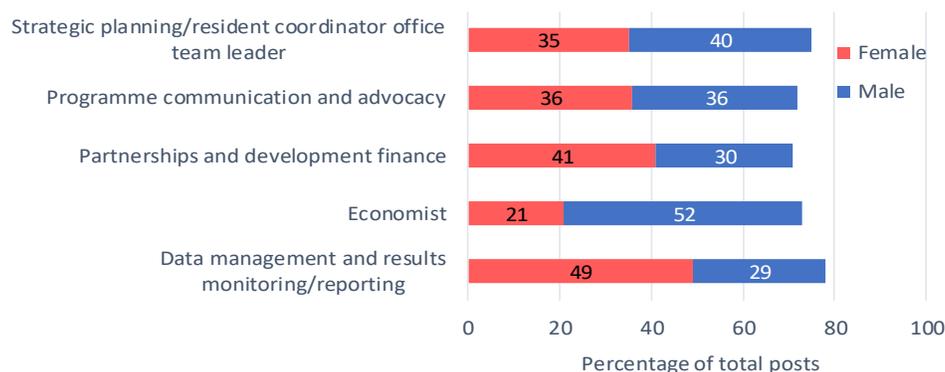
23. Reinvigorated, ramped-up resident coordinator offices underpin the renewed resident coordinator system. Each resident coordinator office now has five core positions covering: strategic planning; economics; data management, monitoring and evaluation; partnership and development finance; and communications and advocacy.

24. About half of the new resident coordinator offices include four national and one international positions, and the rest opted for three national and two international professionals. UNDP has managed national recruitment for the Secretariat, hiring 311 out of an expected 399 national officers. National staff – more than half of them women – made up 53 per cent of recruitments across the five core functions.

25. In April 2019, the United Nations Secretariat launched a global call for a major roster exercise to hire 196 international resident coordinator office staff, mainly

strategic planners and economists. As at March 2020, 140 had been recruited. Two fifths (44 per cent) were women. Recruitment included 69 nationalities.

Figure V
Resident coordinator office staffing – March 2020



Source: Development Coordination Office.

26. Most resident coordinators report that they now have sufficient analytical capacities to better fulfil their enhanced functions. Over 90 per cent believe that the United Nations country team values the new resident coordinator office as a common resource for analysis, policy and programming.¹¹

Defining relationships and accountabilities between the resident coordinator and the United Nations country team

27. A renewed set of clear accountabilities between the resident coordinator and United Nations country team has been put in place through the management and accountability framework country level chapter. New accountability mechanisms allow resident coordinators to provide inputs into United Nations country team-members performance appraisals on United Nations country team-specific goals. By March 2020, UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) had formalized the arrangement; all remaining members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group are expected to do so in 2020. A Development Coordination Office survey in November 2019 found over 90 per cent of resident coordinators stating that the management and accountability framework has changed how United Nations country teams work and improved government perceptions of resident coordinator leadership.

28. A large majority of resident coordinators report clearer understanding of their new leadership role and responsibilities, based on the revised resident coordinator job description. They point as well to enhanced United Nations country team commitment to working together, particularly for joint planning, and sufficient prerogative¹² to reduce duplication of efforts. Over half (56 per cent) of programme country

¹¹ DESA 2019 survey of resident coordinators.

¹² Ibid.

Governments state that the resident coordinator has strengthened United Nations coherence and helped reduce duplication in country.¹³

29. Resident coordinators report some ongoing challenges, such as perceived divergence in reform-related instructions given by different United Nations entities to country representatives; 45 per cent of resident coordinators see “significant disconnects” between the United Nations Sustainable Development Group’s global policies and the United Nations country team reality.¹⁴ Resident coordinator participation in United Nations agencies’ high-level delegations or events remains uneven. Accountability mechanisms through agencies’ performance appraisal systems are not yet fully in place, although work is well under way.

30. The management and accountability framework country chapter will be reviewed in 2020. Management and accountability framework regional and global chapters will be developed following final decisions on regional reviews and an internal review of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group’s arrangements.

Coordination at the regional level to support the resident coordinator system

31. In 2019, the Development Coordination Office established five new regional development coordination offices. All regional directors are in place; and 73 per cent of staff have been recruited. Regional development coordination offices are resident coordinators’ first port of call for technical support and quality assurance of new system-wide planning and programming measures. They help mobilize regional United Nations entities behind national priorities, encourage cross-border initiatives and back resident coordinator peer exchanges. They connect the national to the global level, by ensuring consistency in carrying out and implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Group’s guidance and Executive Committee and Deputies Committee decisions at the country level and helping to channel and consolidate reforms on the ground.

32. Regional development coordination offices have provided extensive training on the new Cooperation Frameworks and pooled regional expertise. Regional inter-agency peer support groups continue to provide technical support and quality assurance for Cooperation Frameworks, increasingly involving regional commissions to ensure a robust economic analysis and policy focus. For example, the Regional Development Coordination Office for Asia and the Pacific facilitated substantive inputs by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to five common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks over 12 months. The peer support group in Latin America and the Caribbean provided the vehicle for inputs by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to four United Nations country teams in the region. The regional development coordination office and the peer support group for Arab States facilitated support by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to nine resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams. Some United Nations country teams are working together to align Cooperation Frameworks to tackle cross-border issues or common challenges.

33. New regional networks for knowledge-sharing have been established among resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, to ensure a demand-driven system whereby United Nations country teams can better tap into regional assets to respond to national priorities and needs. Regional development coordination offices

¹³ DESA 2019 survey of programme country Governments.

¹⁴ DESA 2019 survey of resident coordinators.

have organized regional meetings of resident coordinators, at times in collaboration with specialized agencies, regional commissions and normative agencies, to discuss regional challenges, opportunities and possible collaborations. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, the regional development coordination office organized a first-of-its-kind regional meeting of all resident coordinators with the International Labour Organization (ILO); the regional office in Africa organized similar meetings on climate and environmental change with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and on regional integration with the Economic Commission for Africa. Regional development coordination offices have also facilitated virtual regional exchanges among resident coordinator and agencies, funds and programmes. The Regional Development Coordination Office for Europe and Central Asia, for example, organized virtual exchanges for regional agency directors to help them better engage with resident coordinators in the region. United Nations country teams report that online thematic discussions and information sharing have been useful.

34. Regional development coordination offices have shared guidance on United Nations development system repositioning with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. Most have engaged in regional review consultations. Regional development coordination offices have also advised resident coordinators on management issues arising from the transfer of the resident coordinator system into the United Nations Secretariat and supported resident coordinator office hiring processes. The regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, partnered with ECLAC and UNDP to develop inductions for new resident coordinators and resident coordinator office staff, which were replicated elsewhere. The Regional Development Coordination Office for the Arab States organized a workshop for resident coordinators, resident coordinator offices and United Nations country team representatives on understanding Islamic financing mechanisms in support of the 2030 Agenda, which will be replicated in Central Asia and Europe, as well as the African region, where such mechanisms are also relevant. Regional development coordination offices also help advance the efficiency agenda by supporting resident coordinators in the business operations strategies roll-out.

35. In many regions, regional development coordination offices and regional United Nations development system entities have partnered to bring resident coordinators and United Nations country teams into major regional initiatives and facilitate access to key regional assets. For instance, regional development coordination offices and United Nations development system entities at the regional level work closely together to ensure that the regional knowledge management and statistical hubs, led and hosted by the regional commissions, are fully and easily accessible to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the resident coordinators of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico worked under ECLAC leadership and with other United Nations entities to support a comprehensive intergovernmental plan for Central America covering economic development, social welfare, environmental sustainability and migration management. The regional development coordination office supported the four resident coordinators in the organization of a subregional cluster and hold quarterly meetings assessing subregional trends and planning programmatic collaboration.

Global support for the United Nations development system

36. The Development Coordination Office's global backing of resident coordinators and resident coordinator offices includes operational support and strategic guidance through new policies, guidelines and standards for a renewed collective approach. This centres on the new common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks – for which the Development Coordination Office facilitated an inter-agency process to

develop new guidance – as well as funding and financing strategies for United Nations country teams to leverage all resources to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. The Development Coordination Office has worked with the members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to roll out knowledge management systems to better capture, distribute and use knowledge resources across the United Nations development system. In 2019, it introduced platforms to facilitate knowledge flow across the United Nations development system at the country, regional and global levels on key issues such as strategic planning, data, economic policy, business operations, communications, leadership, development financing and partnerships. A new portal for resident coordinators eases access to key resources and guidance on reform, complemented with monthly webinars. Collectively, these networks host more than 6,000 members across 30 United Nations entities. In the future, a process linking them to other relevant networks will include connecting the resident coordinator office economists' community with the United Nations Economists' Network, hosted by DESA.

38. Close to three quarters of resident coordinators report that the Development Coordination Office has provided “adequate support”,¹⁵ particularly in resident coordinator office staffing and repositioning around the common country analysis, the Cooperation Framework, the management and accountability framework and the business operations strategy. Areas that need improvement are those where work is still in progress, including the resident coordinator and United Nations country team performance appraisals, United Nations country team configuration processes, dispute resolution and collaboration across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions.

Figure VI
Adequacy of support received by resident coordinators from Development Coordination Office



Source: DESA survey of resident coordinators.

Note: Difference from 100 per cent indicates answers marked as “Not applicable” (not graphed).

39. New tools for a new generation of United Nations country teams have been accompanied by efforts to secure resources to build the new resident coordinator system. The Development Coordination Office shepherded the budget proposal through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, established the online platform for the special purpose trust fund for the resident coordinator system, developed guidance on the coordination levy implementation and engaged Member States on voluntary budget contributions.

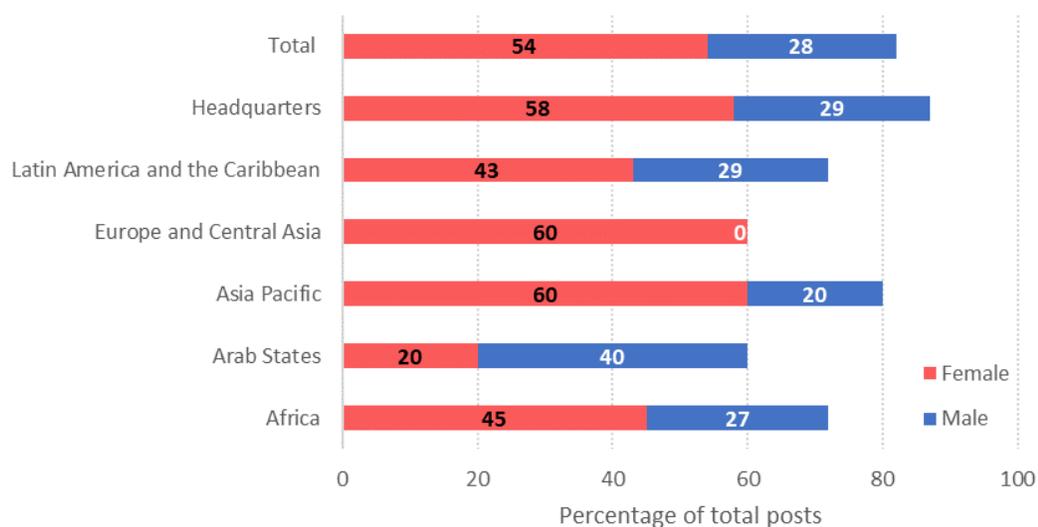
¹⁵ DESA 2019 survey of resident coordinators.

40. The Development Coordination Office has worked closely with members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to support cultural change across the United Nations development system. In 2019, the Group's Principals guided United Nations development system repositioning, collective reforms ownership and key workstreams to build on knowledge and best practices. The Group's strategic results groups contributed to the funding compact, advanced a common partnership approach, initiated work to strengthen data management and results reporting and advanced the Secretary-General's efficiency agenda.

41. The Development Coordination Office also supports work on developing synergies across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions through the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, where it serves as secretariat alongside UNDP, OCHA and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs/Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

42. In parallel with these efforts, the Development Coordination Office completed its own transformation. It carried out extensive recruitment in line with the approved structure and budget to refresh and expand its own capacities, attracting talent from across the United Nations system, Governments and other partners. Currently, the Development Coordination Office's strong, diverse cadre of professionals is 66 per cent female, 56 per cent from the global South and includes 47 nationalities. Overall, as of March 2020, 82 per cent of Development Coordination Office staff at headquarters and at the regional level had been hired.

Figure VII
Staffing of the Development Coordination Office by gender



Source: Development Coordination Office.

43. The enhanced coordination capacities of the Development Coordination Office have proven critical in the wake of the COVID-19 response. Resident coordinators drive the United Nations response on the ground, ensuring that United Nations expertise is used effectively to support countries and leveraging the leadership roles of WHO and UNDP, respectively, to respond to the health crisis and its socioeconomic ramifications. The Development Coordination Office has provided guidance to resident coordinators and resident coordinator offices in handling multiple aspects of the crisis, from internal operational preparedness to the coordination of United Nations development system support to national Governments facing immediate

health needs and longer-term impacts. The Office, along with UNDP, is also co-leading the United Nations task team set up by the Secretary-General to operationalize the immediate socioeconomic response to the pandemic.

Integrated and effective responses in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: United Nations country team results through stronger coordination

44. As the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review reveals, a new generation of United Nations country teams is emerging. Resident coordinators sit at the centre of this transformation, leveraging new tools for joint planning and programming, namely, the common country analysis and Cooperation Framework. Nearly two in three United Nations country teams (69 per cent) report improved joint planning as a key achievement in 2019.¹⁶ Fifteen Cooperation Frameworks were launched in 2019; and 37 are being developed in 2020. A dashboard on the implementation status of Cooperation Frameworks in every country is available on the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's website, along with a Framework-related documents library.

45. To ensure that the common country analysis and Cooperation Framework meet the reform ambitions, the Development Coordination Office partnered with the United Nations System Staff College to deliver training for 41 United Nations country teams on preparing Cooperation Frameworks. Fifty-eight staff across United Nations development system entities were trained as trainers to support – along with regional peer support groups – a growing number of United Nations country teams, Governments and other partners engaged in Cooperation Framework design and implementation.

46. New ways of working are opening access to a broader range of United Nations technical expertise. Full-time resident coordinators and strengthened resident coordinator offices draw the entire range of United Nations system resources together to offer integrated responses tailored to country needs. Three quarters of resident coordinators (75 per cent) report that they now have the capacity to access the wealth of normative and technical expertise and resources across the United Nations development system, including in specialized agencies and organizations with a limited country footprint.¹⁷ Enhanced resident coordinator leadership also facilitates discussion on the right United Nations country team configurations, now mandatory in country planning and programming processes. The aim is to tap the best, most relevant United Nations development system capacities to deliver on the Cooperation Framework.

47. Regardless of whether they are resident in a country or not, all agencies signing a Cooperation Framework are now United Nations country team members. Engagement of agencies not physically present in countries has increased; they represented nearly a third United Nations country team members in 2019.¹⁸ In Asia and the Pacific there has been greater involvement by agencies without a country presence, including the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, in developing common country analyses. Globally, regional commissions are now full-fledged members of 40 United Nations country teams, up from 34 in 2018.¹⁹ “Virtual” United Nations country teams are becoming more common, as in Comoros, where the

¹⁶ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

¹⁷ DESA 2019 survey of resident coordinators.

¹⁸ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

¹⁹ Ibid.

United Nations country team includes 12 agencies with no physical presence on the ground. The new Cooperation Framework in Turkmenistan has 18 United Nations signatories, far beyond the existing United Nations country team configuration of 10 United Nations entities; only 6 signatories will have physical offices in the country.

48. With the backing of resident coordinators and their teams, United Nations country teams are increasingly providing integrated Sustainable Development Goal policy support to national and local governments. There was an 11 per cent increase in joint programmes targeting the Goals, from 445 in 2018 to 498 in 2019.²⁰ Greater government engagement is evident. The Cooperation Framework has also enhanced collaboration with development partners.

Increased government engagement with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams

- In Uganda, after a first-of-its-kind dialogue between the United Nations country team and the President, the Government appointed a new national Sustainable Development Goal focal point to interact with the United Nations country team
- In Senegal, the United Nations country team carried out its first joint field visit, on which 11 agencies engaged with regional government authorities
- In the Maldives, the United Nations country team was joined by the Government at the team's very first common country analysis retreat to discuss the prevention agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

49. In line with the financing imperatives of the decade of action, resident coordinators are engaging with the highest levels of government and convening all partners to help countries reinforce the Sustainable Development Goal financing architecture and leverage public and private investment. Over 15 “pioneer” countries have started designing integrated national financing frameworks with United Nations system support. Resident coordinators lead the overall coordination of such efforts at the country level, with UNDP providing technical leadership, and the European Union, international financial institutions and other partners offering additional support. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, chaired by DESA, is further developing its global methodology on integrated national financing frameworks to support Member States, incorporating experiences and lessons learned from the pioneers.

Increased collaboration with development partners

- In Guatemala, the United Nations country team and the European Union undertook a major exercise to align their respective planning tools, and Sweden bilaterally committed to align to the Cooperation Framework
- In Uzbekistan, a joint United Nations and World Bank retreat helped align both entities' analytical work.
- In Cabo Verde, the resident coordinator and the Foreign Affairs Minister co-led a dialogue with the United Nations country team and all development partners on partnerships and possible new Sustainable Development Goal financing initiatives

²⁰ Ibid.

50. An integrated approach is also visible in efforts to leave no one behind, including through the translation of global strategies into country actions. For instance, the Development Coordination Office worked with the joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund to guide proposals on gender, human rights and vulnerable groups. Joint programmes aimed at gender equality increased by 39 per cent, in 2019.²¹ Seventy-two per cent of Cooperation Frameworks in 2019 featured gender results as an outcome. The United Nations country team gender scorecard has improved gender analysis in the common country analysis and prioritization in the Cooperation Framework. The Development Coordination Office also works closely with the Youth Envoy Office to mainstream the United Nations Youth Strategy. Several United Nations country teams are jointly mapping youth activities and developing more coherent and systematic approaches. Resident coordinators are championing initiatives such as Generation Unlimited, a multisector platform hosted by UNICEF, where all United Nations entities join businesses and youth organizations to jump-start opportunities for young people. The Development Coordination Office also supports resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in advancing the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, with resident coordinators in Fiji, Guatemala, Malawi and Tajikistan coordinating the validation by the United Nations country team of a disability inclusion scorecard pilot. In addition, the Development Coordination Office's enhanced support to resident coordinators for realizing indigenous peoples' rights has reached over 30 countries (from Benin to Costa Rica); and an indigenous peoples' scorecard is in process.

Joint action for gender equality, youth and people with disability is on the rise

- The United Nations country team in Turkey developed the first inter-agency action plan with enhanced complaint mechanisms and support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse
- In Bangladesh, United Nations country team commitments in the system-wide action plan gender equality scorecard translated into a gender-responsive Cooperation Framework, grounded in gender analysis in the common country analysis, for the first time
- In Burkina Faso and Morocco, the United Nations country team is jointly mapping all youth activities. In the former, the team shifted from a sectoral approach to youth to a more coherent and systematic joint effort
- In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, United Nations country teams have begun massive consultations, listening to thousands of youth and people with disabilities, including in rural areas, as part of their common country analysis and Cooperation Framework processes

51. Resident coordinator leadership is enabling a new generation of cross-border programming to help Governments address complex challenges at their request. With support from resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the Heads of State of Kenya and Uganda sealed a historic commitment to improve peace and stability, respond to climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in a disaster and conflict-prone area at the border of the two countries. Similar collaboration in Benin and Togo is embedded in the Cooperation Framework to address cross-border challenges such as population movements, child trafficking, conflict prevention, youth radicalization and epidemics.

²¹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system.

52. The new resident coordinator system has become the anchor for integrated Sustainable Development Goal solutions that link humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions in specific country contexts. Common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks feature stronger analyses of drivers of vulnerability and better highlight interlinkages of interventions by different pillars. The Cooperation Framework in Jordan, for example, includes a vulnerability umbrella that bridges the humanitarian and development divides to address inequality more systematically. Under the resident coordinator leadership, the United Nations country team in Syria is working to develop a strategic response that focuses on community cohesion to underpin much-needed stabilization. Strong coordination across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions is especially critical in transition settings, such as in Mali, where the new Cooperation Framework complements the multi-year Humanitarian Response Plan, the MINUSMA integrated strategic framework and the transition calendar.

53. Despite progress, transformation of the United Nations joint planning and programming approaches is not yet complete. Not all Cooperation Frameworks fully align with the new requirements. The new Cooperation Framework guidance came at a point in 2019 when 15 United Nations country teams had already begun preparing the new Cooperation Frameworks on the basis of previous guidance; moreover, most United Nations country teams are still within ongoing programme cycles. In 2020, all United Nations country teams will need to update their common country analyses to respond to changed country contexts, including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and meet new global standards. Special guidance for complex settings, high-income countries and countries serviced by multi-country offices will also need to be finalized. Structural obstacles to greater synergies between the Cooperation Framework and entity-specific country programmes remain to be addressed, especially to streamline preparation and approval processes for the latter. The governing bodies of UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Women and UNICEF have agreed to adjust approval processes as needed.

Coordination capacity for partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

54. A full-time resident coordinator and a new cadre of dedicated partnership officers have helped improve partnerships for innovative programmatic results. They offer a “one-stop shop” for development partners, facilitating coherent United Nations engagement with all development stakeholders and leveraging partnerships in support of Governments’ development efforts.

55. As a result, more United Nations country teams are collectively engaging in scaled-up, ambitious, strategic partnerships, with some exciting innovations coming to life. In Kenya, the resident coordinator, in close collaboration with the United Nations country team, is supporting the country’s “Silicon Savannah” – a partnership among the Government, development partners, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, civil society and academia in Kenya and the Silicon Valley in the United States of America. The aim of the initiative is to unlock investments to build skill sets and generate potential information technology jobs. In Brazil, the United Nations country team has placed the Sustainable Development Goals at the centre of new partnerships with the justice system and Public Prosecution Service and the National Confederation of Municipalities. The result is Sustainable Development Goal localization in over 5,500 local governments, reaching 200 million people. The resident coordinator and the United Nations multi-country team covering Barbados and member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States have partnered with international financial institutions and the private sector to address the specific

financing constraints of many Caribbean small island developing States. A new private sector engagement strategy has galvanized support from the Global Compact Office, the European Union and the Caribbean Development Bank.

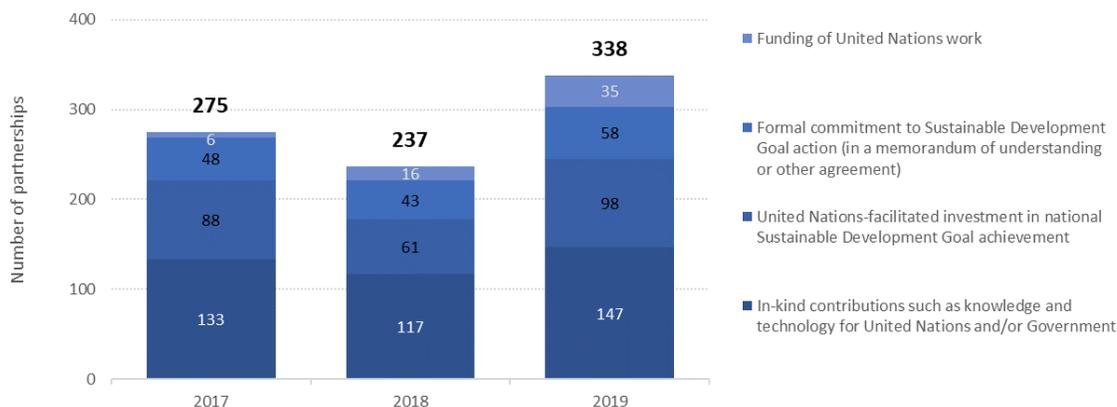
56. Partnerships are shaping whole-of-society efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. In Benin, to prepare the common country analysis, the United Nations country team partnered with a mobile phone company foundation to conduct broad consultations. Using a toll-free number, over 100,000 people (including women, youth, people with disabilities and those living with HIV, among others) could voice their views. One of many issues that came to light was the lack of birth certificates in certain areas, and Government agents stepped forward to help register more than 30,000 newborn children.

57. The United Nations-World Bank partnership is evolving around common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks. In Lebanon, the two organizations are jointly conducting the common country analysis and the systematic country diagnostic to define a common understanding of strategic engagement on the 2030 Agenda. This is an initial step towards aligning the future Cooperation Framework and the first national development plan in three decades.

58. The Development Coordination Office has played an important role in cultivating an environment that enables partnerships, working closely with United Nations Office for Partnerships, the Global Compact and DESA. It has supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in developing common minimum standards for multi-stakeholder engagement in the Cooperation Framework and in shaping the first common approach to research and due diligence for business sector partnerships.

59. The Development Coordination Office is collaborating with OCHA and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs/Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure coordination with humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions, with a focus on the prevention of crisis and vulnerabilities, to achieve the 2030 Agenda. A joint Development Coordination Office-Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs/Peacebuilding Support Office workplan for 2020 will strengthen analytics and support common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks, envisioning special assistance to countries in transition and attention to financing, including through a World Bank partnership. The Development Coordination Office and OCHA are similarly bolstering collaboration on joint analysis, joined-up planning and data sharing, including through information management systems of humanitarian and development partners.

Figure VIII
Total United Nations country team partnerships by type of engagement



Source: United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

Quality funding to drive and incentivize integrated responses: the resident coordinator system role in driving a funding shift

60. In his 2020 report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the Secretary-General reports on the progress to date in advancing the landmark funding compact approved by the General Assembly in 2019. The Development Coordination Office has played a key role, in co-leading the design of the funding compact and supporting its implementation, working closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and Member States, including through guidance on reporting to uphold accuracy and consistency.

61. Resident coordinator commitments under the funding compact include articulating a Cooperation Framework funding strategy, establishing country-level pooled funds, coordinating United Nations country team submissions to the joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and increasing the visibility of core and pooled contributions.

62. Only a few United Nations country teams have articulated funding strategies to date, given the late finalization of the guidance and the ongoing placement of resident coordinator office economists and strategic planners throughout 2019. With these issues resolved by 2020, the number of strategies is expected to increase.

63. Resident coordinator offices also play a key role in the establishment of country-level pooled funds, which have been flourishing in support of national priorities identified in the Cooperation Framework. Some 27 such funds, many successors of the first-generation “Delivering as one” funds, continue to be active; 15 new pooled funds have been established in the wake of United Nations development system reform. 2019 saw an acceleration in the capitalization of these funds. For example, the United Nations country fund in Papua New Guinea saw a major surge in contributions, including for the first time from the Governments of Papua New Guinea and Germany; and a European Union contribution of approximately €100 million is in the pipeline. In Pakistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland committed

£35 million to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Fund for inter-agency work along the north-west border with Afghanistan. For the first time, the Government of Albania provided a \$6.5 million unearmarked contribution to the national Sustainable Development Goal acceleration fund.

64. Country-level pool funds often complement global mechanisms, such as the Spotlight Initiative, strengthen coherence, reduce fragmentation, broaden the donor base, share risk and provide flexibility to adapt to evolving circumstances. In Colombia, for example, the multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace has mobilized \$150 million and in 2019 invested \$2.1 million in private sector investment proposals with a direct impact on the Sustainable Development Goals, which leveraged private sector contributions seven times higher than the initial investment amount.

65. The global joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund is successfully stimulating collective action across United Nations country teams, Governments, the private sector and civil society. It has mobilized \$276 million²² to date and launched two calls for proposals in 2019, following the transition to a new resident coordinator system.

66. The first joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund call for proposals in March 2019 was focused on integrated approaches to social protection, with an emphasis on leaving no one behind and a total envelope of \$70 million. That first call demonstrated how the joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund can incentivize United Nations country team collaboration, with strong government leadership. It resulted in 35 joint programmes committed to improving social protection for vulnerable and marginalized groups, including children, adolescents, minorities, people living with disabilities and the elderly. The programmes link to 33 international financial institution investments; in 17 countries, the World Bank is one of the main partners. In Mauritania, the World Food Programme (WFP), ILO and UNICEF support an integrated social protection system that will reach 280,000 people in an acutely vulnerable region. In Cambodia, through the combined assistance of ILO, UNICEF and WHO, a government cash transfer scheme will reach 200,000 pregnant women and their children by 2022. In Ecuador, ILO, UN-Women and UNDP will enable 1.4 million young people to access decent work by 2022, half of them women. In Georgia, the social protection system, health and social services will be transformed to ensure social inclusion and equal rights for people with disabilities.

67. The second call was focused on Sustainable Development Goal financing and was launched in December 2019, with a \$100 million envelope. This is one of the largest United Nations-led initiatives to promote Sustainable Development Goal financing. It is aimed at creating an enabling environment, such as through financing strategies, strengthened capacities and public-private partnerships. It will invest in key initiatives to offer proof of concept and to replicate and scale up existing initiatives. The selection process for joint programmes prioritizes least developed countries, small island developing States and fragile countries.

Communications for development results: accountability and transparency towards national Governments and their peoples

68. Sustained support for development reform requires enhanced communications for development results, linked to increased transparency and accountability to Governments and the wider public. The present annual report to the Economic and Social Council and the discussions that it informs at the segment on operational activities for development allow the United Nations membership to have a full picture

²² In terms of pledges announced since the establishment of the Fund in 2017.

of resident coordinator system activities and to give guidance to the system. The special purpose trust fund online portal offers full information and figures on resident coordinator system funding.

69. Evaluations play a central function in this effort. The Office of Internal Oversight Services has initiated an advisory engagement to support the resident coordinator system, including audit and evaluation scoping activities that will continue in 2020. Preliminary audit engagements have taken place through missions to Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Board of Auditors is also conducting a development reform pillar audit to be finalized by July 2020. At the country level, the new Cooperation Framework guidance and companion package stipulate mandatory system-wide evaluations of performance and results. In addition, the Secretary-General is taking forward his efforts to strengthen system-wide evaluation, as elaborated in his 2020 report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

70. The Development Coordination Office has improved its data systems, results reporting and transparency tools. The information management system allows the Development Coordination Office to collect information on United Nations country team activities and was upgraded to capture results following the reform. UN Info showcases the joint United Nations entities Sustainable Development Goal programming and continued its roll-out in 2019. To date, it has been adopted by 68 United Nations country teams, and several use it to produce results reports for national Governments. Starting in 2020, UN Info is mandatory for all United Nations country teams embarking on a new Cooperation Framework. In Cabo Verde, the Prime Minister has called it a crucial transparency, accountability, data and storytelling tool to assess joint United Nations results. Overall, there has been a 6 per cent rise in annual United Nations country team reporting on joint results from 2018 to 2019. In 2020, the Development Coordination Office will enhance guidance and further improve tools for annual joint reporting to Governments.

71. A full-time resident coordinator function and resident coordinator offices with dedicated officers for data management and results monitoring have boosted transparency and accountability. To support resident coordinators and resident coordinator offices, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's data ecosystems are being strengthened to improve performance tracking, follow-up and evidence-based policymaking. The creation of the Group's task team on country-focused data and reporting brings together knowledge, expertise, guidance and tools for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and reporting from across the United Nations system, with an online toolkit making diverse resources readily accessible.

72. Increased visibility of resident coordinator and United Nations country team activities has also been enabled by an overhaul of Development Coordination Office-backed online communication tools promoting "coordination at a click". In 2019, the Development Coordination Office launched a revamped United Nations Sustainable Development Group website in English, including resources on United Nations country team and the Group's activities, tools and policies at the global, regional and country levels. It will be available in Spanish and French in 2020 and in all official United Nations languages by 2021. Fifty new United Nations country team websites are active as platforms for data visualization and storytelling, pulling data automatically from the information management system and UN Info. All United Nations country teams are expected to do so by 2021. United Nations information centres also began migrating their websites to United Nations country team web platforms backed by the Development Coordination Office, thereby achieving operational efficiencies and unified messaging.

73. Communications officers in all resident coordinator offices work closely with communicators across the system to reinforce the transparency of United Nations

country team activities, while strengthening the collective voice of the system on the ground. A new global communication network has fully integrated 44 out of 50 United Nations information centres into resident coordinator offices; the six exceptions are due mostly to geographic coverage or different locations from the resident coordinator office. This bolsters communication alignment between the resident coordinator system and the Department of Global Communications. In 86 locations without a United Nations information centre, new communications officers in resident coordinator offices are being recruited; 50 had been hired by March 2020.

Business operations and efficiencies for sustainable development

74. Serving as the secretariat to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's Business Innovation Group, co-led by WFP and UNHCR, the Development Coordination Office has helped advance collective efforts to ensure more efficient United Nations country team operations. This has required considerable efforts and we are now on a positive trajectory. In his 2020 report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the Secretary-General provides a detailed overview of efforts made to date to advance common premises and common services across several administrative areas, building on more ambitious United Nations country team business operation strategies and harmonized principles of mutual recognition and client satisfaction, as well as costing and pricing.

75. The responsibility of resident coordinators for advancing the Secretary-General's ambitious efficiency agenda encompasses all of these areas. The Development Coordination Office currently supports over 40 United Nations country teams in moving towards common premises, for example. The Business Innovation Group is also establishing an inter-agency database of United Nations premises to track every country's current situation and finalizing common premises pilots in six countries as the basis for devising a methodology for consolidation.

76. The merger of 44 United Nations information centres into resident coordinator offices has created efficiencies and savings. A total of 30 United Nations information centres (68 per cent) are now co-located with the resident coordinator office. Most importantly, the 44 communications officers will remain on the accounts of the Department of Global Communications, while reporting directly to the resident coordinator. This has freed up special purpose trust funds originally allocated to communications officers in resident coordinator offices, offsetting other costs, such as for enhanced coordination measures for multi-country offices.

Funding the resident coordinator system

77. The Development Coordination Office has supported the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure that the hybrid funding formula for the resident coordinator system has the highest possible success chance of success, with strong support from Member States and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Member States adopted a model consisting of voluntary contributions, the doubling of the Group's cost-sharing and a 1 per cent levy on tightly earmarked third-party non-core contributions to United Nations development activities. All three funding streams flow into the special purpose trust fund. Full financial reporting is carried out annually, within three months of the calendar year end.

78. To date, 36 Member States have contributed to the special purpose trust fund, with sums ranging from \$15,000 to \$23 million, totalling \$118 million for 2019.

79. The doubling of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's cost-sharing arrangement has been implemented, with strong support from United Nations governing bodies. A total of 17 out of 19 Group members contributed \$75 million out of an expected \$77.5 million in 2019. The World Tourism Organization and the World Meteorological Organization did not participate; the latter has committed to doing so in 2020. The International Trade Centre will join the cost-sharing arrangement in 2020, and UNIDO has committed to participating with its full share. The Group's funding injection was vital to the roll-out of the new resident coordinator system as some donors' contributions and the levy took time to arrive.

80. In 2019, the coordination levy yielded \$30 million, a remarkable outcome less than six months into implementation. The Development Coordination Office developed guidance for operationalizing the levy, in consultation with Member States and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, providing the option of collection by agencies or donors. Since the guidance was circulated to Member States in March 2019, 28 Member States have formally chosen the agency-administered option, while two Member States and the European Union have selected the donor-administered option.

81. In combination, all three funding streams totalled \$223 million. Although this left a shortfall of \$58 million from the \$281 million budget presented to Member States, the resident coordinator system roll-out was implemented effectively. The Development Coordination Office ensured a smooth transition by recruiting staff in stages, in line with cash flow. This phased approach resulted in 2019 closing with expenditures of \$143 million and commitments of \$7 million, totalling \$150 million. It also allowed some funds to be carried over to 2020, providing additional time to mobilize additional contributions and strengthen the funding base. Full expenditure is projected in 2020.

82. With the resident coordinator system now in place, full funding is required for 2020 and beyond. To date, 18 Member States have made firm commitments or contributed \$41 million. This includes a number of multi-year contributions and pledges made at the beginning of 2019. Soft commitments for 2020 total \$37 million. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group's cost-sharing arrangement is expected to yield \$77.5 million, and the levy another \$31 million. This adds up to \$187 million, leaving an additional \$94 million needed for the full budget of \$281 million.

83. To ensure that the Economic and Social Council segment on operational activities for development can fully perform its oversight function over the resident coordinator system, a detailed overview of resources, including their distribution for the next biennium and results for 2019, is provided in the annex. Information on revenues from all three funding streams as well as expenditures can be found at the special purpose trust fund portal (<https://soc.un.org/SPTF>). A new version of the portal will be launched in May 2020 on the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's website.

84. The General Assembly will review the funding model at its seventy-fifth session. Stepping up development coordination means building a system for the future. It is not a one-off project. The funding required represents less than 1 per cent of expenditure for United Nations operational activities for development. At the same time, it adds significant value, as shown in the many countries already benefiting from the reinvigorated resident coordinator system in its first year. Ensuring funding sustainability, including by further expanding the funding base, remains a challenge and a priority.

Conclusion

85. Despite important achievements, we still have some road to travel to ensure that the resident coordinator system – along with the overall United Nations development system – is rooted in robust foundations to respond to the 2030 Agenda ambition and the decade of action urgency with the leadership, scale, quality and speed required.

86. Resident coordinators must demonstrate and earn their role of United Nations country teams leaders. They must fully shift to their new, impartial and stepped-up functions, drawing from and supporting all United Nations development system entities in their efforts to assist national Governments. The resident coordinator selection system redesign is a priority to ensure that the new leadership cohort is in line with today's expectations. The assignment of the right resident coordinator profile to the right place at the right time will be a critical success factor.

87. Resident coordinators must also be able to count on the support that they need. Nascent regional development coordination offices must consolidate their establishment and serve in the reprofiled and restructured United Nations regional landscape, in line with the regional review expectations. Mutual accountabilities between the resident coordinator system and United Nations development system entities must also be fully implemented and adjusted where needed. We must conclude the establishment of longer-term host agreements for resident coordinators and their offices in all countries as soon as possible.

88. The shift towards a collaborative organizational culture must be consolidated. New analytical and planning tools have proven that they greatly improve the ability of the United Nations development system to work together. Yet, with most common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks still in progress or to be initiated, their contribution will become more evident in 2020 and 2021. The step from integrated planning to integrated implementation requires further strengthening. National Governments and donors will continue to play a critical role in ensuring the right incentives to that end.

89. Unfinished mandates, such as the multi-country office and the regional reviews, will need to be implemented in line with Member States' decisions. System-wide evaluation will also need to be enhanced, especially to ensure robust Cooperation Framework evaluations.

90. Funding remains a key component of the challenges ahead. To sustain progress and meet increasing demands, including those brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, full, predictable and sustainable funding remains vital. The contribution by all Member States is critical for a renewed resident coordinator system that benefits all Governments and their peoples. The reinvigorated resident coordinator system review during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, including its funding arrangements, will be a key opportunity to firm up the funding modalities.

91. Nonetheless, as the preceding pages document, only one year after the new resident coordinator system began operations, the decision to elevate coordination for sustainable development to an independent, impartial and empowered function is clearly beginning to show real results. The COVID-19 pandemic will likely be the litmus test for the reinvigorated resident coordinator system to live up to its promise.

Annex

Overview of resources of the special purpose trust fund of the resident coordinator system

Table 1
Financial resources by component

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Component</i>	<i>2019 expenditure</i>	<i>2020 estimate</i>	<i>Changes</i>		<i>2021 estimate</i>
			<i>Variance amount</i>	<i>Variance percentage</i>	
A. Executive direction and management	1 903.2	2 346.4	497.9	21.2	2 844.3
B. Programme of work					
Global coordination	7 546.5	14 392.3	61.5	0.4	14 453.8
Regional coordination	3 310.9	6 659.4	2 884.7	42.7	9 504.1
Country coordination	131 060.5	246 298.7	(2 980.7)	(1.2)	243 318.0
Subtotal B. Programme of work	141 917.9	267 350.4	(74.5)	0	267 275.9
C. Programme support	5 990.6	11 609.7	96.5	0.8	11 706.2
Total	149 811.7	281 306.5	519.9	0.2	281 826.4

Table 2
Financial resources by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2019 expenditure</i>	<i>2020 estimate</i>	<i>Changes</i>		<i>2021 estimate</i>
			<i>Variance amount</i>	<i>Variance percentage</i>	
Post	73 271.7	160 462.5	3 858.6	2.4	164 321.1
Non-post	76 540.0	120 844.0	(3 338.7)	(2.8)	117 505.3
Total	149 811.7	281 306.5	519.9	0.2	281 826.4

Table 3
Post resources by component for 2021

(Number of posts)	Professional and higher									General Service and related		National staff		Total
	USG	ASG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Subtotal	Principal level	Other level	National Professional Officer	Local level	
A. Executive direction and management	–	1	1	–	2	2	1	–	7	2	1	–	–	10
B. Programme of work														
Global coordination	–	–	–	2	10	16	11	–	39	–	3	–	–	42
Regional coordination	–	–	5	–	6	11	5	–	27	1	–	–	5	33
Country coordination	–	2	34	82	84	123	1	1	327	–	–	421	264	1 012
Subtotal B. Programme of work	–	2	39	84	100	150	17	1	393	1	3	421	269	1 087
C. Programme support	–	–	–	1	3	5	2		11	4	1	–	–	16
Total	–	3	40	85	105	157	20	1	411	7	5	421	269	1 113

The overall resource requirements for 2021 reflect a nominal increase of \$519,900 (0.2 per cent) against 2020 resources. This tentatively includes additional resources that will be sought, should Member States endorse the upcoming proposal to the Economic and Social Council on the strengthening of multi-country offices. The increase also includes increased regional coordination capacity, additional capacity for multi-country offices and increased proforma staff costs for 2021, largely offset by a significant reduction in service provision costs and a closer integration and leveraging of the capacity of the United Nations information centres of the Department of Global Communications. This effort was made to ensure that the additional staff requirements could be met while remaining budget neutral overall.

Overview of financial results for 2019

Results for 2019 are reflected in tables 4 and 5 for information purposes.

Table 4
Financial results by component

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Component	2019 Budget	2019 Expenditure	Variance
A. Executive direction and management	2 306.8	1 903.2	403.6
B. Programme of work			
Global coordination	14 352.7	7 546.5	6 806.2
Regional coordination	6 659.4	3 310.9	3 348.5
Country coordination	246 298.7	131 060.5	115 238.2
Subtotal B. Programme of work	267 310.8	141 917.9	125 392.9
C. Programme support	11 573.3	5 990.6	5 582.7
Total	281 190.9	149 811.7	131 379.2

Table 5
Financial results by budget class

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2019 Budget</i>	<i>2019 Expenditure</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Post	160 346.9	73 271.7	87 075.2
Non-post	120 844.0	76 540.0	44 304.0
Total	281 190.9	149 811.7	131 379.2

In 2019, revenue for the resident coordinator system amounted to \$223 million, comprising \$118 million from voluntary contributions, \$75 million from the cost-sharing arrangement and \$30 million from the 1 per cent coordination levy. This was significantly less than the estimated revenue of \$281 million for 2019 but did not affect the implementation of reforms in the first year, as recruitments were staggered in accordance with the implementation plan, resulting in a large variance against budget in post costs and travel. However, bridging this gap for 2020 is an absolute priority. In 2020, recruitment will be completed, which will contribute to a significantly higher budget implementation rate in 2021.