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New York, 18 December 2015

Subject: UNDG LAC Support to UNDAF

Dear Mauricio,

As you advance on the important exercise of formulating a new United Nations Development Assistant Framework (UNDAF) in Bolivia this year, I am pleased to extend the support of the Regional United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG LAC). In my capacity as Chair of the UNDG LAC, I would like to share with you and your UNCT the support services provided by the UNDG LAC during the UNDAF preparation process.

The support provided by the UNDG LAC builds on the guidelines of the UNDG, the updated UNDG Strategic Priorities (2013-2016), and the UNDG Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Delivering as One. As per the UNDG Strategic Priorities, the responsibility for technical support and quality assurance lays in the regional level. For this purpose, the UNDG LAC has established and revitalized the Peer Support Group (PSG), which acts as the first-stop shop for substantive/technical UNDAF support to UN Country Teams.

The 2015 UNDAF Support Strategy for the LAC region emphasizes the engagement of the UNDG LAC and the PSG in the earlier phases of the UNDAF preparation process, involving senior level staff in order to provide strategic advice to the UNCTs. Consequently, as per the UNDG LAC decision taken on 19 January, the Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) has elevated its chairmanship to the Director level and is being Co-chaired by Ms. Luiza Carvalho, UN Women Regional Director, and Mr. Richard Barathe, Chief of the Country and Regional Program Team, UNDP Regional Bureau for LAC.

The PSG is available to support the preparation of the UNDAF roadmap, CCA and UNDAF, provide support to Strategic Planning Retreats (SPR), help your UNCT identify capacities, gaps, and comparative advantages of the UN in the country, advise on CCA/UNDAF and SOPs guidelines, and assist with their compliance. The attached UNDAF Support Strategy for UNDAF roll-out countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region provides further details on the menu of services available.

In order to ensure a quality and timely support, I would encourage that you engage with the PSG at an earlier stage, in the design and preparation of your Country Analysis and the UNDAF, and not only for monitoring compliance and quality assurance.

Mr. Mauricio Ramirez-Villegas
United Nations Resident Coordinator
Bolivia

Cc: United Nations Country Team Bolivia



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The PSG is also available to provide support to your UNCT to accelerate the implementation of the SOPs. The attached 2015 UNDG LAC Strategy to Accelerate the Implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures encourages UNCTs to ensure the application of the 15 core elements of the SOPs, which will enable the UN System to better deliver together and better allow to respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UNDG LAC recommends that your UNCT uses the formulation of the UNDAF for advancing in the implementation of the SOPs, and through the Peer Support Group, stands ready to support you on this endeavor.

Particularly, as the elaboration of the UNDAF moves forward, the UNDG LAC encourages your team to advance with the development of the Business Operation Strategy which, as stated in the SOPs, is a logical extension of the UNDAF/One Programme outlining the UNCT's common approach to operational and programme implementation.

Additionally, the UNDG LAC Secretariat acts as the regional help desk on CCA/UNDAF and provides support to the UNDG LAC Peer Support Group. In that regard, the UNDG LAC Secretariat will work closely with you to ensure that support is tailored to your specific country needs and context. We look forward to providing you with the support you need in the preparation of your UNDAF. Annex I offers Strategic Guidance on how to formulate a new and effective UNDAF.

In line with the UNDAF Support Strategy for the LAC region, and in order to enhance the direct involvement of the Regional Directors with the UNDAF roll-out countries, a system for demand-driven mentorship has been implemented over the last four years. Please note that early next year we are going to assess the support provided during the 2015 cycle. This effort is key to revamping this initiative and thereby ensuring sustained political dialogue with the Resident Coordinators, particularly during challenging or difficult situations that may hinder the UNDAF formulation process. The UNDG LAC Secretariat will contact you next year once there is a decision on the way forward.

The UNDG LAC is also supported by regional **Interagency Working Groups** which can be mobilized to provide technical support during the UNDAF process in the areas of their expertise: Human Rights, Protection, HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Monitoring and Evaluation, and South-South Cooperation. Considering that the final evaluations of the UNDAF are mandatory, the Regional IAWG on M&E stands ready to provide technical support and advice to the countries during the main milestones of the evaluation such as the elaboration of the terms of reference, the draft inception report and the draft final evaluation.

Should your UN Country Team be interested in any of the above support, or should you have any queries regarding the UNDAF or SOPs implementation, kindly contact our Regional Coordination Advisor (maria.guallar@one.un.org) with copy to the UNDG LAC Secretariat (undglacsec@one.un.org).

Sincerely yours,

Best wishes for 2016!

Jessica Faieta

Chair, United Nations Development Group for
Latin America and the Caribbean



ANNEX I. UNDG LAC Strategic Guidance on how to formulate a new and effective UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or One Programme

1. One UN – One Mission: Make the UNDAF/One Programme a real integrated UN exercise within the framework of the Post 2015 Development Agenda/SDGs

The UN needs to adapt its strategic planning and programming process to be fit to support the SDGs implementation at the country level. The One Programme Pillar of the UNDG Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is the new way of doing business at the programmatic level. Having this into consideration, the UNDG LAC encourages the UNCT to use the unique opportunity that the development of the UNDAF represents to strategically position the UN in the context of the Post-2015/SDG Agenda. In this light, the UNCT should make a real, integrated UN exercise in a true partnership with the government and other partners and stakeholders, including civil society. To do this, UNCTs should move from the silo/vertical traditional way of delivering to a more integrated and results-focused one that allows you to deliver better together, strengthen the position of the UN in your country, and improve the capacity of the UNDS to respond to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Concretely, in the process of formulation and implementation of the UNDAF, the UN Country Team is encouraged to:

- Identify in the UNDAF *links between the new global development agenda and the national priorities*, as well as how the UNDS will support countries to achieve the SDGs.
- Promote the application of a sustainable development approach that integrates the social, environmental, economic and governance perspectives into the UNDAF outcomes.
- *Pursue genuine integration of the five programming principles* in the UNDAF, substituting sector-by-sector approaches for integral analysis and solutions.
- Define *3 to 5 strategic outcomes making sure that they are achievable* and that the UNDS will be able to measure its concrete contributions to their achievement.
- *Consider the comparative advantages, capacity assessments, and expertise of the agencies involved* with regard to addressing key development challenges in the country to define more precisely the cooperation modalities of the UNDS, and use them to find a balance between strategic focus and answering to the SDGs.
- Operationalize the UNDAF in a way that promotes the *active participation of all agencies* with a stake in the country's challenges, including the non-resident agencies; and use the tools offered by the Standard Operating Procedures.
- *Assure government ownership* by encouraging the active participation of all governmental sectors. Sectorial ministries participation should be encouraged to guarantee an integrated approach to development issues.
- Establish a *Joint National/UN Steering Committee* with the participation of all national stakeholder to provide strategic guidance and oversight in the implementation of the UNDAF/One Programme.
- Incorporate creative alternatives to *promote civil society participation in the UNDAF/One programme process* so that citizens, especially youth and marginalized groups, have adequate mechanisms to make their voice heard.



- *Observe the timelines of the national cycles and development plans* and not only those of the UN agencies.
- Lay the foundation for the implementation of the One Programme pillar of the SOPs *through the elaboration of joint annual/biannual work plans and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks* that will strengthen the accountability of the UNDS in the country. Operationalize the joint work plans through [Results Groups](#) chaired by a Head of Agency on behalf of the UNCT.
- Include a [legal annex](#) containing the requirements previously included in the fund's and programme's Country Programme Action Plan.

2. Analyze the context to make a difference

At this juncture in time, countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region are facing certain common challenges, such as widespread inequity, insecurity and impunity, environmental degradation and increased vulnerability to climate change. At the same time, the countries of the region differ widely, not only measured by the vast differences in income ranging from low, to middle and high income countries, but also in the historical legacies that have produced unique circumstances regarding the social fabric, ethnic composition, national identity and culture. All of these factors will affect our chances of having an impact. It is therefore recommended that the UN Country Team develop *a strong contextual analysis* of its UNDAF that acknowledges the common regional and sub-regional challenges while closely analyzing and defining the unique country context. In this regard, UN Country Teams should contemplate:

- Developing a *good understanding of the socio-economic determinants (root causes)* of specific national problems with a view to providing an integrated solution in areas in which the UN can make a difference in the country.
- *Analyzing inequities in a disaggregated manner* to assess the severity of the existing gaps and identify the areas that show greater disparities, particularly the lowest quintile, i.e. those "difficult to reach" who in the past have not (sufficiently) benefitted from our development efforts. A strong UNDAF entails indicators to track changes in the level of disparities among subgroups of the population and thereby measure real impact.
- Analyzing "*what is new*" and *foreseeable in the national context*: The UNCT should analyze and define any new developments in the country, including any emerging social and political actors, and the accompanying new vulnerabilities, strengths, challenges and opportunities.
- Incorporating in the analysis the *identification of strengths and achievements of the country in terms of its potentialities for South-South cooperation and international assistance*. The UNDAF is more than an assessment of development challenges with prescribed development solutions, formulated as a mere contract between a donor and a recipient. It should be elevated to a partnership agreement that acknowledges the progress made, the valuable experiences gained and good practices developed by the national partners, while using those resources as a stepping stone to further promote South-South cooperation.
- Incorporating robust analysis of the *relevance and value added of the UN for the country*, particularly in the case of those middle and high income countries that, on the one hand, have developed important capacities for the benefit of the region, and, on the other hand, are struggling to close



internal inequality gaps. Here, it is important to define a targeted approach that allows the UN to play a role in the areas where it can have an impact, and avoids areas where national or other international actors are better placed to provide support.

- Finally, the UN Country Team is strongly encouraged to *prioritize and to do so within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals*. A targeted approach that focuses on a few key national challenges that speak to the Sustainable Development Goals and that the UN is strongly positioned to address is far better than a 'blanket-approach' that seeks to address a wide range of development challenges in areas where the UN will have to compete with better-positioned actors.

3. Pay attention to the common regional challenges

Certain thematic issues represent *common challenges to the region* and *should inform any analysis that forms the basis of an UNDAF*. These include, in particular, the enormous disparities and inequities that affect populations across Latin America and the Caribbean; the environmental degradation and climate change that continue to increase vulnerabilities and lead to the loss of important natural capital and livelihoods; the human rights deficit; the call for supporting socio economic development with a parallel institutional offer for security, justice and impartial ruling by the law; impact of insecurity and violence on populations and development efforts; the natural and man-made disasters that may generate a humanitarian crisis in any of the countries of the region; and the existence of, and disproportionate impact on, vulnerable groups, and, depending on the context, women and children. The UN Country Team is encouraged to study the impact of these regional challenges, identify opportunities for strengthening preparedness and national capacities in that regard, contemplate the Sustainable Development Goals, and the inter-linkages across thematic areas.

4. How does the UN contribute to achieve development results?

It is important to see the UNDAF as the window of opportunity for defining the key areas where the UN has relevance and can make a positive difference for the countries and populations that we serve. Please make sure that the priorities of your new UNDAF always provide a solid basis for developing a relevant UNDAF with carefully thought-through indicators, which can serve as a useful instrument of accountability of the UN in each country in the future.

Please make sure that your UNDAF entails more encompassing (not sectorial) and higher level development indicators that can help measure the impact of the UN presence in the country. Also, your UNDAF should provide operational details about the inter-agency mechanisms and processes for monitoring UNDAF performance and reporting to the UNDG LAC so that the document allows for the evaluation of the impact of your work in the country.

