

## Highlights on the United Nations development system reform

With the mechanics and structural aspects of the reforms now well advanced,  
**profound shifts are underway across the system.**

- **Development is now at the heart of the UN.**  
The 2030 Agenda has greater emphasis across UN activities.
- **UNCTs' focus is more on policy advice and integrated programmatic support** and less on project support.
- **Resident Coordinators (RCs) galvanize support around the SDGs**, leveraging their new independence and additional capacities to convene the UN system and all partners.
- UNCTs are **increasingly accountable to the RCs for their performance against the UN Cooperation Framework.**
- **Strengthened RC offices with analytical capacity**, including economists and strategic planners.
- **Regional economic commissions and non-resident specialized agencies are increasingly engaging.**
- **New financing instruments**, including new pooled funds in-country, are catalyzing joint action.
- Structures are being created to **harness and manage knowledge, information and data.**
- **Efficiency gains have increased by approximately 57%** between 2019 and 2020 (i.e. over USD 100M) in countries.
- **All regions transitioned to new Regional Collaborative Platforms**, with common knowledge hubs and unprecedented levels of transparency.
- Capacities and resources in **Multi-Country Offices (MCO)** have been significantly stepped up; overall support to all **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** has increased.

**85%** of Governments recognize that RCs have helped leverage partnerships for national SDG achievement

**76%** of Governments agree that RCs have enhanced synergies between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding

**27%** of UNCT members do not reside in the country – but contribute with their policy depth

**12** UNSDG entities recognize reporting obligations to the RC for planning, programme implementation and resource mobilization

**14** UNSDG entities recognize their country representative's relationship vis-a-vis the RC in their representatives' job descriptions

**17** UNSDG entities reported to their governing body on actions taken to address institutional bottlenecks and promote coherence within UNCTs

*Source/independent government surveys conducted by DESA in late 2020*

### What remains outstanding: The road ahead in 6 key areas

UN Principals and governing bodies to keep up the pressure for a **real culture change within the UNDS** and a **full realignment of all entities for an integrated response to be effective.**

**UNCTs' footprint** must be more in line with evolving country needs and shift from individual small-scale projects to focus on **more integrated policy solutions** commensurate with the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

**Funding for the RC system is not yet sustainable**, especially considering the critical role it plays today as a catalyst and enabler for the UNDS.

Refining the DCO's structure and further diversifying profiles and skillsets of Resident Coordinators and their offices.

Further advancing **efficiency efforts**, especially on the most complex aspect, such as, shared **local** service centres (Common Back Offices (CBOs)), where beneficial.

Furthering system-wide commitment to **effective implementation of the regional review, strengthening of MCOs and establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation function.**

### Host Governments' feedback - key highlights

**91%** indicate that the UN is more relevant to their country's development needs compared to three years ago

**92%** say that RCs have ensured a coherent UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic

**77%** report that, since the UNDS repositioning in 2018, the UN system now works in a more collaborative way

**92%** agreed that the new Cooperation Frameworks have enabled them to effectively address and respond to national priorities, up from 89% in 2019

**88%** indicate that RCs effectively lead UNCTs, up from 79% only a year before

**87%** indicated that the UN presence is adequately tailored to their priorities, significantly up from 76% in 2019

**79%** note that RCs have sufficient prerogative to fulfil their mandate, compared to 71% in 2019

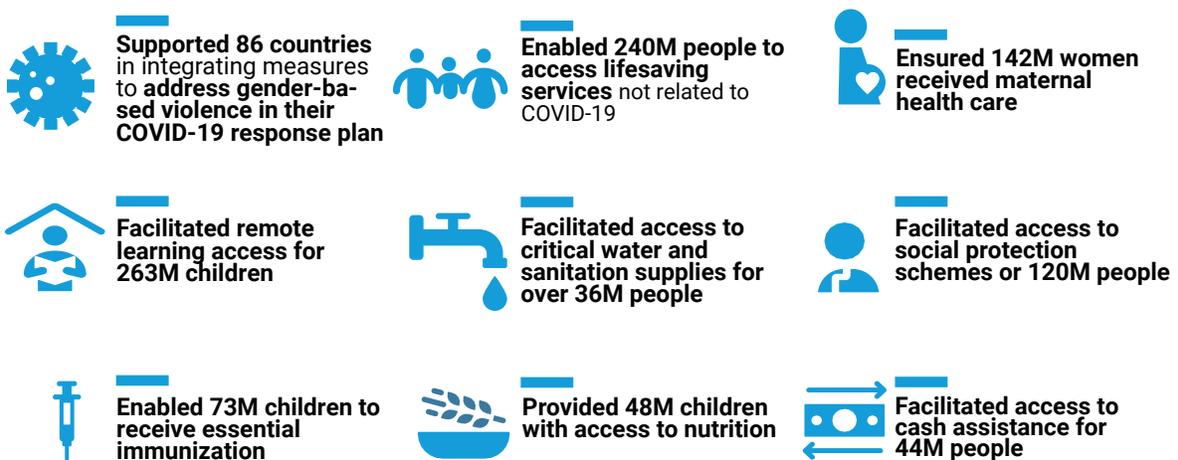
**85%** agree that UN staff in country has the right mix of capacities and skills to support their country's development

Most perceive the COVID-19 response as comprehensive (74%), timely (76%), effective (77%), targeted towards at-risk groups (84%) and sufficiently coherent with the Cooperation Framework and the humanitarian response (84%)

*Source/independent government surveys conducted by DESA in late 2020*

### UN socio-economic response to COVID-19

[https://data.uninfo.org/Home/\\_SERP](https://data.uninfo.org/Home/_SERP)



**Success will be our ability to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.** The signs are encouraging. The COVID-19 pandemic was the first stress test of these reforms; the **system responded to COVID-19 with unprecedented coherence and sense of urgency. It achieved results on the ground that saved lives and minimized the impact of the crisis.**