

## 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 global service centres, 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

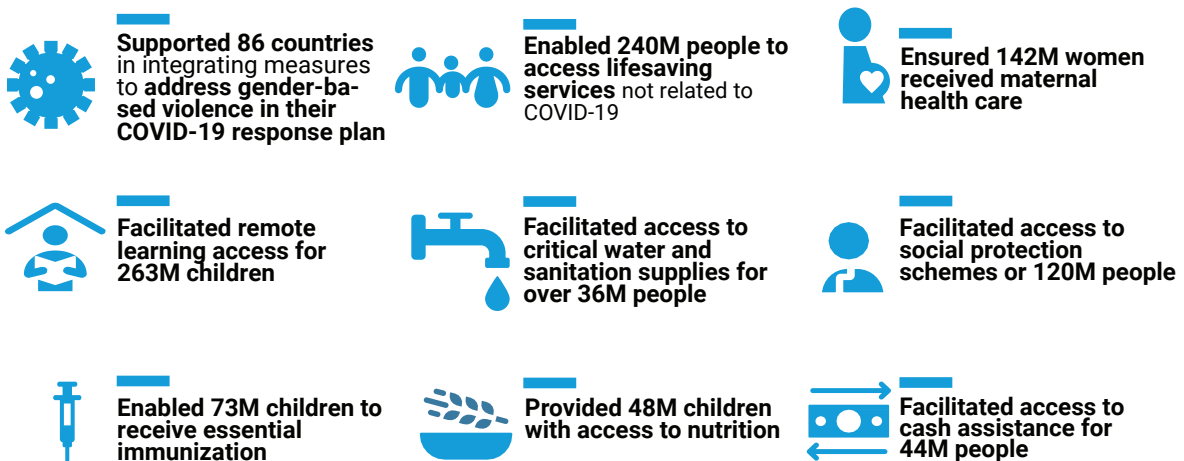
**85%** agree that UN staff in country has the right mix of capacities and skills to support their country's development

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.