

## The reinvigorated resident coordinator system – Explanatory Note –

### 1. Current status

The resident coordinator (RC) system coordinates all organizations of the UN dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of the nature of their presence in the country. The RC system aims to bring together the different UN development system (UNDS) entities to improve the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of the UN's operational activities for development at the country level.

At the heart of the RC system are resident coordinators, who lead 130 UN Country Teams (UNCTs) operating in 164 countries and territories. Resident coordinators are the designated representatives of the Secretary-General for development operations at the country level.

In its current configuration, the RC system is governed by the Management and Accountability System (MAS) agreed upon by all entities of the UN Development Group (UNDG) in 2008. The MAS establishes that, while owned by the whole UNDS, the RC system is managed by UNDP. It also defines a set of measures to be implemented by different parts of the system (UNDG, UN DOCO, UN agencies, regional UNDGs, UNCTs and resident coordinators) in support of the RC System.

### 2. Proposals for an impartial, independent, empowered resident coordinators

A repositioned UNDS that delivers on the 2030 Agenda relies heavily on a reinvigorated RC system driven by impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinators. Resident coordinators are expected to lead the UN's country-level operational activities for development towards a more integrated working model that can better support SDG achievement, with greater accountability and impartiality.

To operationalize this new RC system the Secretary-General's December 2017 report proposes actions in the following areas:

1. Aligning skills and profiles to national sustainable development needs. This will require:
  - Resident coordinators who remain strong sustainable development professionals, with a deep understanding of the conceptual shift brought by the 2030 Agenda, as well as of national planning processes.
  - Resident coordinators who are effective leaders and team builders and able to draw on the expertise and assets of the entire UN system to address Member States' development priorities.
  - Resident coordinators who have the skills and competence to work across the development–humanitarian–peacebuilding continuum where needed.
  - A pipeline of resident coordinators that brings the best and brightest sustainable development professionals internationally, is gender balanced and reflects geographic diversity.
  - Maintaining the requirement for independent, merit-based, assessment for every new resident coordinator.
2. Strengthening leadership, authority and accountability, with resident coordinators operating within a clear framework for management, accountability and governance. Achieving this will involve:
  - Institutionalizing the following authorities so that resident coordinators can effectively perform their roles:

- Taking final decision on UNDAF strategic objectives to be recommended for Government endorsement, in line with the 2016 QCPR.
  - Informing the configuration of the country-level presence and leadership profile of UNCT members.
  - Inputting in the signing-off of respective agency programmes to ensure alignment with UNDAF priorities.
  - Vetting inter-agency pooled funding at country level for alignment with national priorities and the 2030 Agenda.
- Establishing a dual reporting model, with UNCT members accountable and reporting to their entities on individual mandates, and reporting to the resident coordinator on respective contributions to collective results toward achievement of 2030 at the country level.
  - Building on the current UNCT performance appraisal system, ensuring that resident coordinators appraise the performance of UNCT members and, *vice-versa*, that UNCT Agency Heads inform the performance of resident coordinators.
  - Having a collectively owned dispute resolution mechanism underpinning an empowered and impartial Resident Coordinator system.
  - Adequately staffed RC Offices to ensure sufficient substantive capacities to lead UNCTs. Many RC Offices today are underfunded for the duties required to meet the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. This would include – as core competencies in every context - expertise in strategic planning, policy, strategic partnerships, economics and monitoring and evaluation.
  - Ensure access to sufficient pooled funding by RCs to steer coherence and catalyze collective action at scale.
  - RC talent development, supported by a transformed DOCO.
3. Achieving independence and impartiality through full separation of the functions of the Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, while continuing to rely on a strong and responsive UNDP integrator platform and back office. This will require:
    - Having UNDP’s operational platform and advisory services serving as a bedrock for UNCTs and new RC System, drawing on the expertise of all funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including non-resident.
  4. Implementing measures at the regional and global levels commensurate with and in support of changes proposed at the country level, including a transformed DOCO to better support independent and impartial resident coordinators. Enabling results through new funding arrangements for the RC System, including:
    - A core annual budget of \$255 million to cover for the basic costs required for an effective independent RC System. This represents an increase of \$80 million compared with the current under-funded system resourced through UNDP core funds, UNDG cost sharing and in-kind support (e.g. secondments from UN entities). Over 80% of this amount would be invested in enhancing capacities and skill sets at country level, the remaining 15% would be for enhancing capacities at regional and global level.<sup>1</sup> The increase reflects:
      - (a) An additional staff member per RCO, with a minimum capacity of five staff members and reprofiled and upskilled competencies in coordination and strategic planning, economics, tailored policy support, results monitoring and evaluation and strategic partnerships.

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<sup>S</sup>See table on next page.

- (b) Two additional professional support staff for each regional team of the UNDG, under a new regional manager at the Director level; and
- (c) An enhancement of the capacities of DOCO, commensurate with its strengthened role.

Location	Current cost components	Current cost <sup>2</sup>	Proposed changes	Additional future cost	Future total (% spent on enhancing field capacities)
Country (RCs)	- 129 RCs - 129 drivers & assistants - RC travel costs (50k/RC)	~\$40m ~\$15m ~\$5m	- Same costs, no longer funded through UNDP		~\$60m
Country (RCO's)	- Average of 4 RCO headcount per RCO (total of ~560) <sup>3</sup>	~\$60m	- Addition of 1 RCO headcount per country - Upskilled RCO headcount level to get to standard RCO profile	~\$15m ~\$35m	~\$110m
Regional	- 50% of 5 UNDP regional ASG's time - 1 P4 and P3 coordination post in each of 6 UNDG regions	~\$5m	- 1 additional regional manager (D2) per region - 2 additional P3s and G7 assistant per region	~\$5m	~\$10m
HQ	- ~30 DOCO staff	~\$10m	- Increased DOCO capacities	~10m	~\$20m
Facilities & services <sup>4</sup>	- Facilities (15% of salaries) and services (15% of salaries)	~\$40m	- Facilities (15% of salaries) and services (15% of salaries) on new posts	~\$15m	~\$55m
<b>Total</b>		~\$175m (current cost of system)		~\$80m (increased system cost)	~\$255m (future cost of system)

- A coordination fund with annual capitalization of \$35 million is also proposed to enable resident coordinators to perform their duties and to catalyse in-country efforts for priority initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> Rounded to the nearest \$5m

<sup>3</sup> The current RCO head count includes full time UN staff, as well as all temporary and short-term persons working in RCOs.

<sup>4</sup> Services (15% of personnel spend) for all staff at country, RCO, and regional levels, including HR, procurement, finance, IT, communications, audit, and logistics. Facilities (15% of personnel spend) for all staff at country, RCO, and regional levels, including rent, electricity, phone, equipment, and security

### 3. Implementing the proposals for an independent RC

The following issues will be taken into account in implementing the Secretary-General's proposals for an impartial, independent and empowered Resident Coordinators:

#### ✓ Sequencing the separation of the RC System from UNDP

There are ongoing QCPR mandates to enhance the functions and operations of the RC System that will be immediately operationalized. Other proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, such as a dedicated RC function and enhanced funding, will require Member States' endorsement. Once these proposals have been agreed by Member States, the UNDG will revise and update management and accountability arrangements governing the RC system (e.g. the 2008 MAS), including accountability and reporting lines between resident coordinators and UNCT heads. This will be done collaboratively with UN Principals and translated into agency-specific rules and regulations. For aspects that may need governing body approvals, such issues would be discussed in governing bodies.

#### ✓ Resident coordinator selection

The RC selection process is currently among the most rigorous in the UN system. The selection process entails agencies nominating candidates (from inside and outside the UN system) to an independent assessment, agency nomination of high-caliber candidates from those who have passed the assessment, in-depth review and recommendations through an inter-agency review, and final consideration of a short list, culminating in nomination by the Secretary-General.

Under the new arrangements being proposed, resident coordinators, as international civil servants, will continue to be selected and appointed by the Secretary-General, with governments playing three key roles in this process: first, providing an upfront read-out of current country context and priorities, as captured in the UNDAF, to inform the best-fit profiles in the nomination process. Second, host governments will continue to be requested to provide formal agreement on the UN Secretary General's nomination before the selected candidate is officially appointed for the RC position in that country and will then provide accreditation of the selected resident coordinator upon arrival in country. Finally, RCs will provide annual reporting to host governments on UNDG results, allowing national authorities to hold RCs and UNCTs accountable on their collective support to SDG achievement.

Going forward, the existing independent, merit-based RC assessment will be maintained, while improving the effectiveness of the appointment process. Steps will be taken to increase access to this assessment by the highest caliber of external candidates, with additional efforts being made to meet the Secretary-General's target of gender parity and his commitments towards geographical diversity. This will be achieved through the development of an interagency leadership talent pool across the UN system, among other measures.

The underlying objective behind these measures is ensuring that resident coordinators are selected according to the enhanced needs of the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that the right profiles are deployed to the right contexts, as part of the Secretary-General's commitment to enhance transparency in RC selection and deployment. Where appropriate to the country context, resident coordinators will also be required to have the competencies needed to effectively lead humanitarian and post-conflict recovery responses.

Internally, steps will be taken to improve inter-agency mobility and ensure that it is adequately incentivized to strengthen the resident coordinator pipeline and under the general premise that resident coordinators must have a strong understanding of the sustainable development agenda. As defined and underpinned by Agenda 2030, UN leadership will have to be able to act and lead an integrated UN Country Team response.

✓ **Upgrading skills of resident coordinators**

The Secretary-General's vision sets as an imperative to ensure that resident coordinators are strong sustainable development professionals, with high standards of accountability and deep skills in coordination, collaboration and results focus to support the UN's collective contribution to a country's drive on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

To achieve this, UN DOCO will facilitate and provide an enhanced leadership development package for resident coordinators and UNCTs to recalibrate and strengthen sustainable development knowledge, skills and capabilities, both individually and as a team. This will be done across critical areas of leadership performance, such as strategic collaboration, integrated analysis, foresight and risk management, as well as advocacy and communication on sustainable development and expertise on emerging issues. In addition, all resident coordinators will have to go through a process of formal SDG certification. RC induction training will also emphasize the deepening of country specific knowledge. The overarching goal is to ensure that resident coordinators' leadership capabilities remain at the cutting edge of knowledge and skills to better lead the UN under the new SDG agenda. Making this possible will require ramping up and streamlining ongoing training and leadership development support systems in the areas outlined above.

✓ **Dual reporting**

Under the Secretary-General's proposal for the adoption of a dual reporting model at country level, UNCT members will maintain a direct reporting line to their agencies' headquarters on agency-specific in-country activities. In addition, UNCT members will have a second reporting line to resident coordinators on the implementation of the UNDAF which is the UN's collective contribution to the 2030 Agenda in-country. This dual reporting system will ensure that UNCT members remain fully accountable to their respective entities as they deliver on agency-specific mandates, while at the same time supporting collective responses for the delivery of results on the ground.

Details on how this dual reporting model will be implemented will be defined by the UNDG following Member States consideration of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General. To this effect, the UNDG will review and update current UNDG management and accountability frameworks and systems.

✓ **Dispute resolution mechanism**

A new RC system with more authorities for the resident coordinator, dual reporting lines, and a reinvigorated UNDG will require an updated dispute resolution mechanism. This mechanism will seek to resolve disputes between resident coordinators and entity representatives, as well as among UNCT members, over issues such as strategic priorities of the UNDAF, programmatic gaps and overlaps or where the resident coordinator feels individual country programmes may be in contradiction with UNDAF focus and results. Critical to the new dispute resolution mechanism will be a stronger DOCO, able to support RCs and UNCT members on a process that would start by country-level facilitation and would involve the respective regional director as required. As a last resort, the matter could be escalated to the UNDG for resolution.

✓ **Accountability for results towards Member States and host governments**

The UN's interface with host governments in country will not change from the current set-up, with resident coordinators and UNCTs remaining fully accountable to the host government for delivery of development results. The resident coordinator will be empowered to ensure a stronger, more cohesive and strategic system-wide approach by the UNCT that responds to national priorities.

Through an enhanced UNDAF and in consultations with host governments, resident coordinators will lead UNCTs to define and agree on the UN's strategic response to government priorities and report on results. Resident coordinators will report annually on results to the government concerned as well as to the

Secretary-General. In the absence of consensus within the UNCT, the resident coordinator will make final decisions on the strategic objectives in the UNDAF, in line with the QCPR and in accordance with the agreed dispute resolution mechanism. Individual entities will maintain their relationship with line ministries, but now under a more coherent framework and towards jointly-defined priorities.

At the global level, the Secretary-General will increase his interface with Member States on UN development system matters through his dialogue and annual reporting to ECOSOC.

✓ **Multi-hatting of resident coordinators**

Current multi-hatting arrangements for the resident coordinator will remain the same: resident coordinators and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) will continue to report to the Secretary-General, through UN DOCO and DPKO/DPA, respectively. When designated as Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) she/he will continue to report to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). In a situation where a SRSG is present in an integrated mission setting, the resident coordinator will act as one of his/her deputies, with no duplication of functions. In humanitarian settings, humanitarian coordinators already serve as resident coordinators, hence avoiding any possible duplication or overlap in RC/HC leadership positions. The Secretary-General's proposals in this area of multiple-hatting is to enhance the synergies and accountabilities of each reporting line/mandate.

✓ **Oversight and performance management of resident coordinators**

Under the new arrangements proposed for the repositioning of the UNDS, resident coordinators will report to the Secretary-General through UN DOCO, with management and oversight of day-to-day activities of resident coordinators being carried out by the UN DOCO Director, who will be supported by adequately staffed regional desks.

These new arrangements will not involve creating new layers of bureaucracy, as UN DOCO would take on this intermediary role, detached from any individual agency. These functions are currently performed by regional UNDGs Chairs, who also serve as UNDP regional directors. With these functions transferred to UN DOCO, resident coordinators would have a direct reporting line to the Secretary-General.

In executing its oversight and management role, the UN DOCO Director will report to the UN Deputy Secretary-General, as UNDG Chair, and will have overall responsibility for talent development and performance appraisal of Resident coordinators. Such arrangements will be critical in responding to three imperatives for an impartial and effective RC System:

1. More effective support and oversight of resident coordinators.
2. Greater accountability, with one clear entry point for Member States for development coordination at the global level.
3. Provide an operational and backstopping platform, allowing the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General to play their strategic leadership and oversight role, while UN DOCO concentrates on the day-to-day management of the RC System and its role as secretariat to the UNDG.

The UN DOCO Director will continue to count on the full involvement, inputs and expertise of regional UNDGs in performing these RC management and oversight functions. This will ensure continuity in the level of system-wide engagement that currently exists regionally, and which provides for strong, senior-level backstopping support to UNCTs that is close to demand and regionally attuned.

In this light, annual performance assessments of resident coordinators will continue to be carried out by the six regional UNDG teams, with the UN DOCO Director chairing and guiding these meetings, instead of the regional director of UNDP as currently is the case.

Regional UNDGs will continue to provide substantive guidance and expertise to UNCTs both in their mandate areas and as an integrated whole. Policy and programmatic support to UNCTs will be facilitated and enhanced by regular joint meetings of Regional UNDGs and Regional Coordinating Mechanisms (RCMs). This will ensure a common, integrated platform for UNCT support at the regional level.