

Evaluation of the Resident Coordinator system in complex settings

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INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) assessed the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the Resident Coordinator system in delivering its sustainable development-focused mandate in complex settings. The evaluation focused on those 31 countries where the Resident Coordinator is additionally designated as Humanitarian Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General and/or Deputy Special Coordinator.

United Nations programming in complex settings was widely regarded as coherent by governments, Resident Coordinators, country team members and senior mission staff. The Resident Coordinator system contributed to enhanced coherence by effectively engaging and convening United Nations humanitarian, development and peace and security actors for highly coordinated and collaborative strategic planning processes.

Further, notwithstanding the highly challenging environments within which it operated, the Resident Coordinator system in complex settings supported a continuous focus on recovery and development. It played a critical role in engaging and convening stakeholders at the national level to advocate for, promote dialogue on and support collective approaches to sustainable development. Additionally, the Resident Coordinator system directly supported governments, with and on behalf of country teams, to develop national strategic agendas and visions to advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, facilitated national progress reporting and coordinated United Nations input to national reports, strategies and policies.

In addition, the Resident Coordinator system supported holistic programmatic approaches to advancing sustainable development in complex settings alongside the humanitarian response. This included joined-up strategic planning and area-based programming that incorporated the humanitarian response with recovery, resilience and longer-term development initiatives.

Nevertheless, despite effective management of mandated internal coordination processes and efforts to advance dialogue on sustainable development, the Resident Coordinator system was not adequately capacitated or fit for purpose to meet additional demands and deliver against its expanded portfolio in complex settings. Resident Coordinators lacked adequate support to fulfil all aspects of the roles and responsibilities required to cover the expansive needs and demands in complex settings. Human resources were largely deemed insufficient for the increased and rapidly evolving scope of work assigned to Resident Coordinator offices in these settings.

OIOS makes four important recommendations to the Development Coordination Office to:

- Review the Resident Coordinator system staffing structure in complex settings and produce an options paper on resourcing.
- Collate, develop and share good practices and approaches on sustainable development funding and financing.
- Liaise and coordinate with relevant departments and entities to surface good practice in joined-up risk analysis and risk-informed planning in complex settings.
- Revise relevant elements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group guidance on humanitarian-development-peace collaboration and planning in exceptional circumstances to include agreed approaches to, and good practices on, joint analysis and complementary planning and programming.

I. Introduction and objective

1. The overall objective of the OIOS evaluation was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the Resident Coordinator system in delivering its sustainable development-focused mandate in complex settings.
2. To ensure conceptual clarity on the evaluation objective and questions, the following definitions were used:
 - **Resident Coordinator system:** Development Coordination Office New York and regional offices, Resident Coordinators and Resident Coordinator offices.¹
 - **Complex settings:** Country contexts where the United Nations has development and humanitarian and/or peace and security mandates to deliver and where the Resident Coordinator is additionally designated as Humanitarian Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General and/or Deputy Special Coordinator.²
 - **Operational activities for development:** All activities of the United Nations development system to support countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.³
 - **Coherence:** The extent to which the whole of United Nations support is aligned with country-level needs and priorities and is delivered in an integrated, coordinated and complementary fashion across pillars and sectors and consistent with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴
3. The evaluation conforms with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. The general frame of reference for OIOS is set out in General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272 and in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/273.⁵
4. The management response of the Development Coordination Office is provided in the annex.

¹ OIOS-IED utilizes taxonomy consistent with Deputy Secretary-General reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The 2023 Report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office stated that the "resident coordinator system, [is] comprised of the Development Coordination Office in New York and in five regions, as well as 130 resident coordinators and their offices around the world [sic]". [E/2023/62](#), paragraph 2.

² Humanitarian Coordinators (n=21) in place at evaluation outset in the following countries: Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Chad; Colombia; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Kenya; Madagascar; Mali; Mozambique; Myanmar; Niger; Nigeria; Pakistan; Philippines; Syrian Arab Republic; Sudan; Ukraine; Venezuela; Yemen; and Zimbabwe. Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary Generals (n=8): Afghanistan; the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Haiti; Iraq; Libya; Somalia; South Sudan. Deputy Special Coordinators (n=2): Lebanon; Occupied Palestinian Territory. All references to "31 countries" includes these 30 countries and one territory.

³ [A/RES/71/243](#)

⁴ The definition for coherence was developed and validated with the Development Coordination Office as part of the inception phase for OIOS-IED's 2021 evaluation of the Resident Coordinator system (report [E/AC.51/2022/2](#)). The evaluation focused primarily on aspects of coherence related to supporting the sustainable development-focused mandate of the Resident Coordinator system's work, as detailed in paragraph 9 below.

⁵ OIOS' mandate includes the departments, offices and programmes of the United Nations Secretariat.

II. Background

Mandate and objective

5. General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system guides the scope and implementation of Resident Coordinator system activities.⁶ In line with resolution 72/279, the substantive mandates of the Resident Coordinator system are derived from the 2030 Agenda.⁷ The Resident Coordinator system objective is to contribute “to accelerate Member States’ progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through strengthened United Nations development leadership, robust coordination mechanisms, tools and frameworks, the effective management of joint resources and improved transparency of results to improve the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities for development at the country, regional and global levels”.⁸

Resources

6. The Resident Coordinator system is funded through the Special Purpose Trust Fund comprising three funding streams: (i) Member State voluntary contributions; (ii) a cost-sharing arrangement among the United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities; and (iii) a one per cent coordination levy on tightly earmarked non-core contributions to United Nations entities development activities.⁹ The 2024 budget for the Resident Coordinator system was \$281 million USD.¹⁰

Structure and roles

7. The Resident Coordinator system is headed by the Secretary-General, with global leadership exercised by the Deputy Secretary-General on his behalf as the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The Development Coordination Office is responsible for day-to-day management of the Resident Coordinator system under the direction of an Assistant Secretary-General, who reports directly to the Deputy Secretary-General.¹¹ The United Nations Economic and Social Council is the principal oversight body for the Resident Coordinator system.

8. At country level, 130 Resident Coordinators lead United Nations country teams operating in 162 countries and territories.¹² In 31 of these countries, Resident Coordinators are also designated as Humanitarian Coordinators and/or Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and/or Deputy Special Coordinators. These additional roles are defined as follows:

- **Humanitarian Coordinators** are “responsible for leading and coordinating humanitarian action of relevant organizations in country with a view to ensuring that it is accountable to the affected population, principled, timely, effective, efficient and contributes to longer-term recovery”.¹³ Humanitarian Coordinators represent, and report to, the respective Emergency Relief Coordinator.

⁶ [A/RES/72/279](#)

⁷ [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

⁸ [A/78/6 \(Sect. 1\)](#)

⁹ <https://unsdg.un.org/SPTF>

¹⁰ [A/78/6 \(Sect. 1\)](#)

¹¹ [A/RES/72/279](#)

¹² https://data.uninfo.org/Home/_LBRCStatistics

¹³ [IASC Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator](#), p.1

- **Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General** support the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General to manage a mission’s financial, physical and human resources and ensure that “staff engagement and the actions of its civilian, military and police components within the country are guided at all times by international human rights and gender equality norms and standards”.¹⁴
- **Deputy Special Coordinators** support Special Coordinators in their leadership and coordination of all United Nations efforts in country in furtherance of the conflict prevention agenda.¹⁵

III. Scope and Methodology

9. The evaluation period covered 1 January 2019 to 31 July 2024 and was conducted with the following scope:

- Resident Coordinator system at country level:** The evaluation focused only on the Resident Coordinator system at country level, including the Resident Coordinator and the Resident Coordinator office.
- Complex settings:** The evaluation focused only on the 31 countries noted in paragraph 2 above.
- Development focus:** The evaluation focused on the role of the Resident Coordinator system in complex settings and the sustainable development-focused mandate of the Resident Coordinator system’s work.¹⁶ The evaluation did not assess the effectiveness of all United Nations responses, or focus on the distinct roles and responsibilities within the Humanitarian Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General or Deputy Special Coordinator functions that are guided/supported by separate entities and/or coordination structures.¹⁷
- Issues related to advancing the normative agenda (including Leave No One Behind):** In line with General Assembly resolutions and United Nations guidance, where feasible, the evaluation focused on the mainstreaming of gender perspectives, disability inclusion, environmental issues and human rights.¹⁸

10. The evaluation scope did not include:

- An assessment of activities of country team members, humanitarian country team members, mission staff or other United Nations system actors.** The evaluation did not assess the relevance and effectiveness of the activities of United Nations country team or humanitarian country team members, mission staff or other United Nations system actors,

¹⁴ Terms of Reference for the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (November 2021).

¹⁵ <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/unscpl>

¹⁶ Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

¹⁷ “United Nations responses” refers to humanitarian and/or emergency response(s), including actions taken before, during or following an emergency, crisis or other event to save lives, reduce health impacts, protect societies and meet the basic needs of affected populations. <https://www.unocha.org/we-coordinate>; <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/response>

¹⁸ For the purposes of this evaluation, the term “normative, cross-cutting issues” includes human rights, gender equality, disability and environmental considerations. [ST/AI/2021/3](https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/st-ai-2021-3), para 5.5(b). [A/RES/74/4](https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/a-res-74-4), paragraph 27(a).

although it recognized that outcomes depend on both enhanced cooperation among United Nations system entities beyond the Resident Coordinator system control.

- (b) **Funding mechanisms.** The evaluation did not include a systematic assessment of the Resident Coordinator system role as relates to funding mechanisms, as this is better suited to the role of audit and/or the United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-Wide Evaluation office.

11. The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach comprising:

- (a) Surveys administered to the following stakeholders in the 31 countries within the scope of the evaluation:¹⁹

- i. Resident Coordinators
- ii. United Nations country team members (hereafter, country team members)
- iii. Senior mission staff
- iv. Government officials²⁰
- v. Civil society representatives²¹

- (b) Time allocation/workload analysis of all 31 Resident Coordinator offices²²

- (c) Two country case studies in South Sudan and Ukraine consisting of the following data collection activities:²³

- i. Document review
- ii. Interviews: Resident Coordinator system staff (n=13); country team members (n=13); senior mission staff (n=4); government officials (n=10); and other external stakeholders (including civil society organizations and international financial institutions) (n=14)
- iii. Direct observation of four meetings²⁴

- (d) Review and analysis of quadrennial comprehensive policy review data relating to the 31 countries within the evaluation scope

¹⁹ Surveys were fielded in July 2024. Response rates: Resident Coordinator survey: 65 per cent (20/31); country team member survey: 50 per cent (318/635); senior mission staff survey: 77 percent (24/31); government official survey: 35 per cent (27/78); civil society representative survey: 40 per cent (43/108).

²⁰ All government officials surveyed were members of the national Joint Steering Committee or equivalent structure. Survey respondents were selected through purposive sampling from lists submitted by 21/31 Resident Coordinator offices.

²¹ All civil society representatives surveyed were members of the humanitarian country team and represented either national or international non-governmental organizations.

²² Submissions received from 29 of 31 Resident Coordinator offices.

²³ Case study countries were selected in consultation with the Development Coordination Office with due consideration to the following selection criteria: Geographical representation; selection of one country where the Resident Coordinator was also designated as Humanitarian Coordinator and one country where the Resident Coordinator was appointed as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and designated Humanitarian Coordinator; inclusion of a peacekeeping context; and data collection feasibility. Case study data served to provide qualitative insights and illustrative points.

²⁴ This included Resident Coordinator office, country team and Heads of Cooperation meetings.

- (e) Review of 18 Cooperation Framework evaluation reports²⁵
 - (f) Comparative analysis of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals to provide country context and allow for a comparative analysis between the 31 countries within the evaluation scope and the countries excluded from the scope
 - (g) Review of relevant accountability and oversight reports produced between 2021 and 2023
12. OIOS convened an evaluation reference group comprising representatives from six United Nations entities to provide confidential input into the evaluation scope, design and early findings.²⁶
13. A limitation to the evaluation methodology was the difficulty in engaging stakeholders in complex settings, which affected survey response rates and limited the number of stakeholder interviews in the case study countries. This was mitigated by the use of other available data sources such as quadrennial comprehensive policy review data and Cooperation Framework evaluation reports.

²⁵ Cooperation Framework evaluation report countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine.

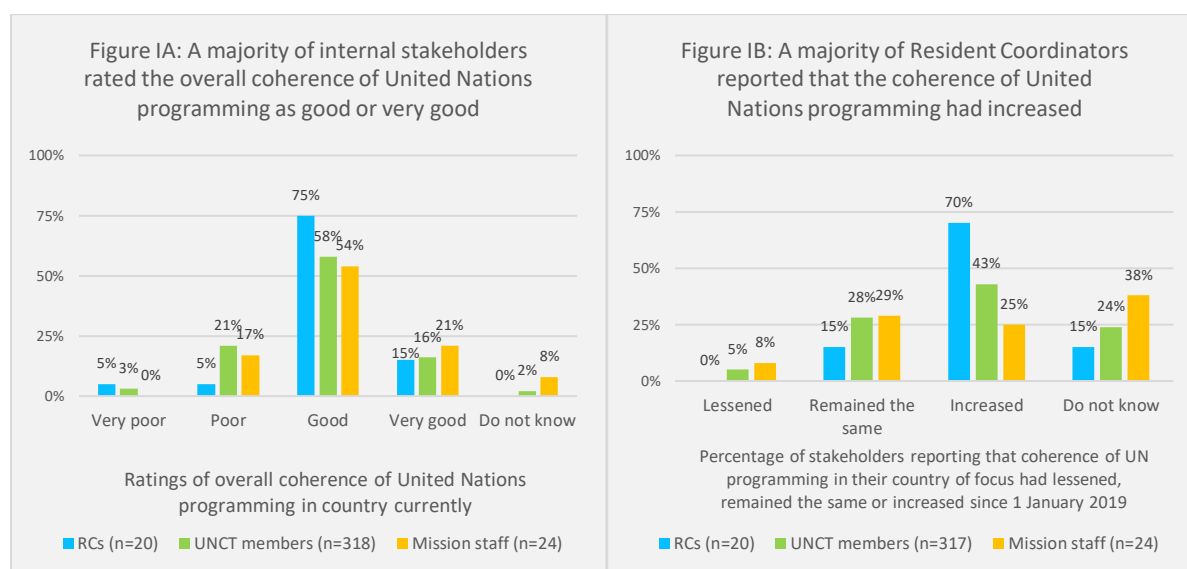
²⁶ Reference group member entities: Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Department of Peace Operations; International Labour Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

IV. Evaluation Results

- A. The Resident Coordinator system effectively enabled collaboration between United Nations development, humanitarian and peace and security actors for more coherent programming in complex settings

Resident Coordinator system leadership and support contributed to more coherent United Nations programming in complex settings

14. Stakeholders generally assessed United Nations programming in complex settings as coherent. Most government officials surveyed (59 per cent) rated the coherence of United Nations programming in their respective countries as good or very good; most Resident Coordinators, country team members and senior mission staff surveyed (90, 74 and 75 per cent, respectively) gave the same positive ratings for their countries, as shown in Figure 1A. This aligned with findings from a case study country where government officials, civil society representatives and partners interviewed confirmed a coherent and complementary United Nations approach across development and humanitarian programming. Further, 56 per cent of government officials surveyed reported that the coherence of United Nations programming in complex settings had increased since the reform of the Resident Coordinator system. As shown in Figure 1B below, 70 per cent of Resident Coordinators reported similar increased coherence.



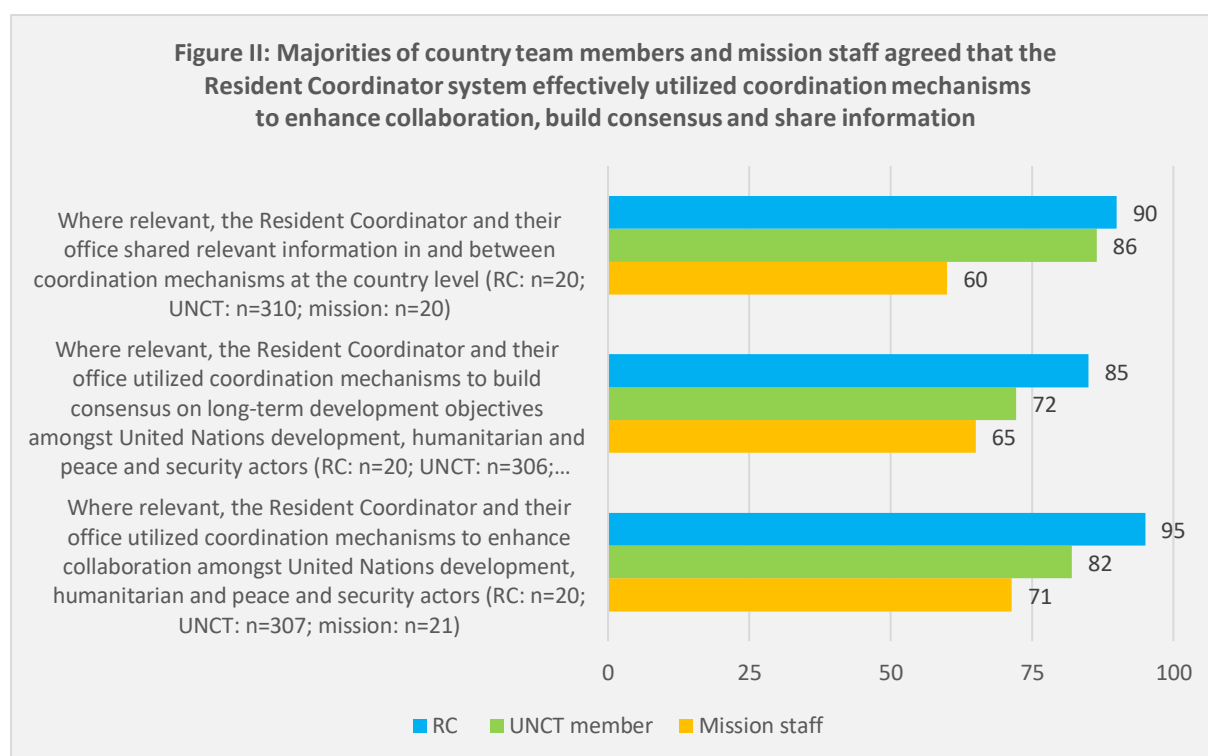
15. Majorities of government officials and civil society representatives surveyed (81 and 70 per cent, respectively) reported that it was the Resident Coordinator system that contributed directly to this more coordinated and coherent United Nations programming. This aligned with the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, where 83 per cent of government officials surveyed reported an increased or strengthened Resident Coordinator focus on greater coherence and reducing duplication of efforts since the reform of the Resident Coordinator system in 2019; nearly all (91 per cent) also reported that the Resident Coordinator had displayed increased or strengthened focus on common results.

16. Despite these improvements, 44 per cent of Resident Coordinators and 44 per cent of country team members surveyed suggested that there were opportunities to improve coordination between United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. This included opportunities to better: address key challenges relating to a competitive funding environment; harmonize individual agency planning and programming towards collective objectives and initiatives; and support inclusion, collaboration and

collective decision-making amongst United Nations agencies in planning processes. Some government officials surveyed and five Cooperation Framework evaluation reports also highlighted challenges relating to siloed working approaches between United Nations agencies.

The Resident Coordinator system effectively utilised internal coordination mechanisms to enhance collaboration between United Nations humanitarian, development and peace and security actors

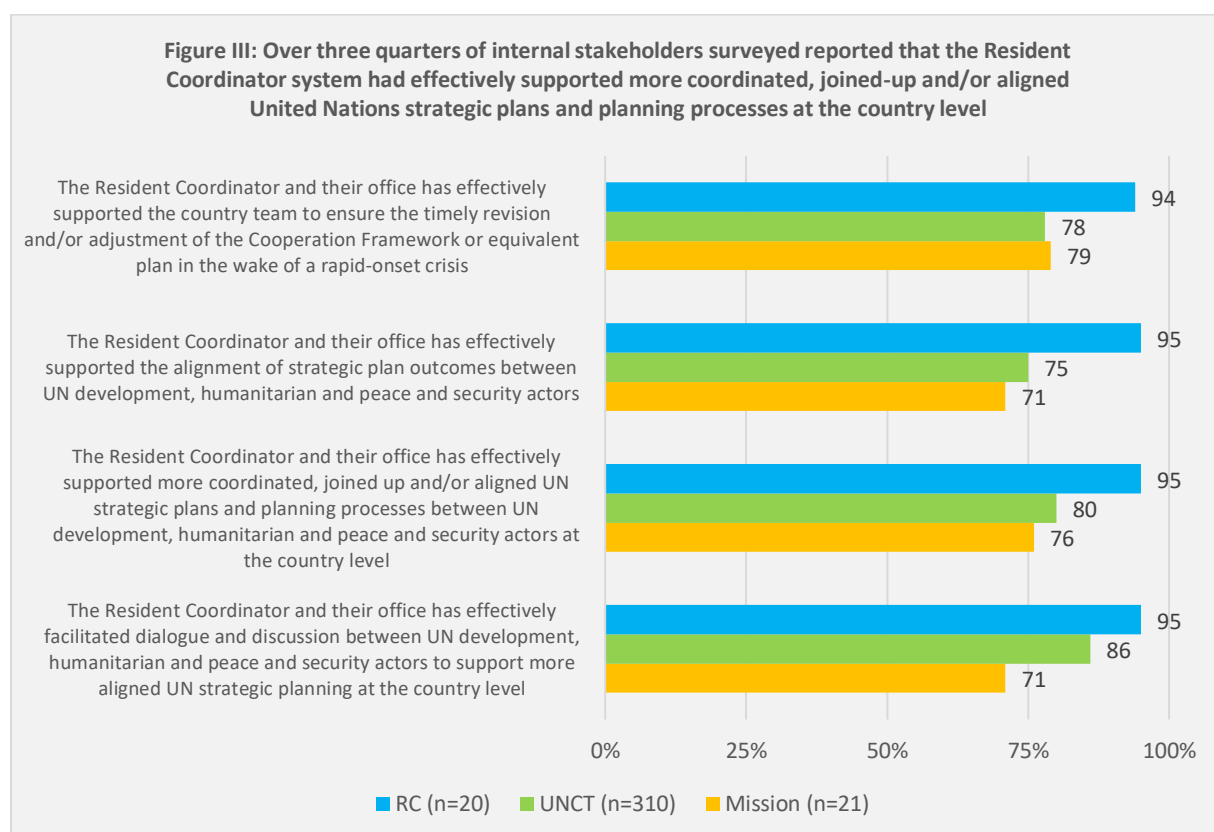
17. Most Resident Coordinators, country team members and mission staff surveyed reported that the Resident Coordinator and their office effectively used coordination mechanisms – such as the United Nations country team and other informal mechanisms - to enhance collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace actors in complex settings, as shown in Figure II below. Furthermore, Resident Coordinator office staff and country team members interviewed from the two case study countries confirmed Resident Coordinator system effectiveness at fostering collaboration between United Nations development and humanitarian actors through these mechanisms. One common approach to support collaboration was the engagement of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in both country team and humanitarian country team meetings, facilitating joined-up responses and programming. This aligned with findings from three Cooperation Framework evaluation reports which highlighted the Resident Coordinator system contribution to enhanced collaboration through the management of, and information-sharing between, country team meetings and thematic working groups.



18. Beyond formal coordination mechanisms, the Resident Coordinator system also promoted collaboration through more informal modalities, including sharing information and facilitating joint retreats between United Nations humanitarian and development actors. For example, in one of the two case study countries, the Resident Coordinator facilitated a discussion and knowledge sharing amongst United Nations humanitarian and development actors at a joint retreat to ensure a common understanding of key challenges and programming approaches.

The Resident Coordinator system also effectively convened United Nations humanitarian, development and peace and security actors for more coordinated and complementary strategic planning processes

19. Most Resident Coordinators, country team members and mission staff surveyed (90, 74 and 75 per cent, respectively) reported that country-level strategic plans and planning processes between United Nations development, humanitarian and peace and security actors were well aligned and complementary. All ten mission settings reported using planning frameworks with joint structures linking missions and country teams to support operational development. Furthermore, stakeholders reported that the Resident Coordinator system directly supported aligned and complementary strategic planning processes. Most United Nations survey respondents also agreed that the Resident Coordinator system had effectively supported more coordinated and aligned United Nations strategic plans and planning processes, as shown in Figure III below.



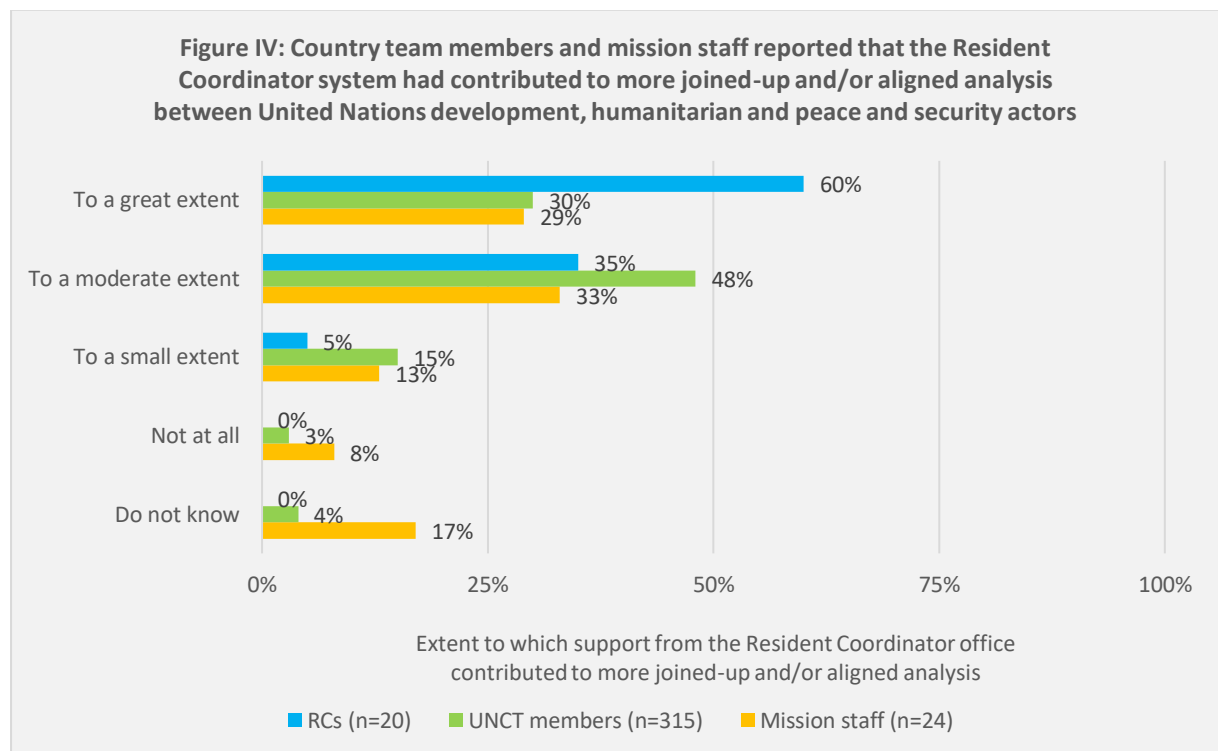
20. The Resident Coordinator system also effectively managed the timely revision of strategic plans to meet changing contextual needs. This included supporting the country team to redefine core development priorities and managing time-sensitive processes to extend or develop Cooperation Frameworks or shorter-term strategic plans in response to humanitarian crises. For example, in one case study country, the Resident Coordinator system effectively led the process of developing, and subsequently updating, a Transitional Framework in line with needs arising from a national humanitarian crisis. Results from three Cooperation Framework evaluation reports, and from stakeholders surveyed and interviewed, confirmed Resident Coordinator system effectiveness at overseeing complex and collaborative planning processes.

21. Government officials interviewed agreed that the Resident Coordinator system supported more coordinated and shorter-term approaches to strategic planning to ensure that United Nations planning and programming was sufficiently responsive and adaptive to evolving contexts. At the same time, some interviewed government officials and stakeholders advocated for an increased focus on, and preference for, shorter-term and more adaptive planning instruments in complex settings. One

government official voicing this view advocated strongly for the continued use of shorter-term planning instruments during active crises; this official noted challenges with the volume of requests they had received from the United Nations for input on longer-term strategic plans for the following four years.

The Resident Coordinator system contributed to more joined-up analysis in complex settings to support responsive strategic planning and to inform immediate programming needs

22. Country team members and mission staff surveyed provided generally positive ratings of the Resident Coordinator system contribution to more joined-up and/or aligned analysis, as shown in Figure IV below. Speaking to challenges in this area, some Resident Coordinator office staff and country team members interviewed in the two case study countries noted a lack of substantive and aligned analysis.



23. Nevertheless, in both case study countries the Resident Coordinator system effectively contributed to more joined-up analysis to inform strategic planning and to support immediate programming needs that arose from unanticipated crisis situations. This included the following examples:

- **Common country analysis (CCA):** In both case study countries, the CCA was cited as a primary example of joined-up analysis between United Nations development, humanitarian and, where relevant, peace and security actors that had been facilitated and supported by the Resident Coordinator system. Eight of 31 country teams surveyed for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review also reported that they had conducted joint humanitarian, development and peace needs analyses to inform the CCA and Humanitarian Needs Overview.
- **Context and trend analysis:** The Resident Coordinator system worked with the country team and external partners to produce a range of analytical products based on the evolving country context; for example, in one case study country, the Resident Coordinator office partnered

with United Nations agencies and international financial institutions to conduct a joint analysis on the economic crisis.

- **Rapid disaster needs assessments (RDNAs):** In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator office coordinated technical inputs from country team members to multiple RDNAs. A partner in this country noted that the Resident Coordinator office was the primary United Nations counterpart for the RDNA and commented on the office's substantial and valued technical inputs and effective coordination of United Nations agency contributions.
- **Post-disaster needs assessments:** Immediately following a disaster in one case study country, the Resident Coordinator system provided the government with a mapping of United Nations agency presence and activities in the affected area and supported the country team on a post-disaster needs assessment. This included convening country team members, gathering data, connecting relevant agencies and partners and mapping response activities to identify programming gaps.
- **Disaster risk analysis:** In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator system effectively facilitated and coordinated a flood risk analysis involving United Nations development, humanitarian and peace and security actors.

- B. To support a continued focus on sustainable development in complex settings, the Resident Coordinator system effectively engaged and convened external stakeholders for national dialogue on development, facilitated United Nations input to national agendas, strategies and policies aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and facilitated collective United Nations approaches

The Resident Coordinator system actively engaged with national stakeholders to maintain a development focus in complex situations

24. The Resident Coordinator system supported and advanced a focus on sustainable development in complex settings through stakeholder engagement and management; this required navigating dense networks of national, regional and international stakeholders. Despite this complexity, the Resident Coordinator system was perceived to have effectively engaged with a wide array of stakeholders to progress dialogue on recovery and sustainable development. In one case study country, some staff and partners highlighted the challenge of engaging with and coordinating across diverse networks and entities during active crises.

25. The Resident Coordinator system engaged first and foremost with host government counterparts and provided support to senior officials in central government ministries. Government officials interviewed described a strong working relationship involving regular engagement through bi-lateral meetings, direct communication, working groups and national events. Resident Coordinator office staff interviewed also emphasized the Resident Coordinator system role to represent the United Nations, to build relations with governments and to coordinate government requests for support. This included managing reputational risk and building trust with the government.

26. While civil society engagement was less extensive than with government counterparts, most civil society representatives surveyed (56 per cent) reported that Resident Coordinator system engagement with their organization promoted and supported the sustainable development agenda to a great or moderate extent. A majority of civil society representatives interviewed also noted the Resident Coordinator role as a vital link between civil society and the government.

The Resident Coordinator system also effectively convened stakeholders to advance sustainable development within complex contexts

27. External stakeholders interviewed highlighted the critical role that the Resident Coordinator system played in complex settings to convene stakeholders to promote dialogue on, and collective approaches to, sustainable development, while concurrently engaging with stakeholders about the collective response to immediate crises. They most frequently pointed to the following three key modalities for doing so:

- (a) **Heads of Cooperation networks:** Resident Coordinators effectively co-chaired Heads of Cooperation meetings that convened the United Nations, donors and international financial institutions to improve coordination of the international response to crises. In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator successfully used this network to advocate for decentralization and local capacity-building on community recovery initiatives, contributing to the adoption of a Decentralization Roadmap and a revised State Strategy for Regional Development.
- (b) **National platforms for recovery and durable solutions:** The Resident Coordinator system has played a key leadership role on national recovery platforms. In one case study country, this included establishing a multi-stakeholder Durable Solutions Steering Committee to ensure a concurrent focus on humanitarian and early recovery initiatives and to strengthen coordination between stakeholders. This Committee later evolved into an Expanded Steering Committee for Community Planning, Durable Solutions and Recovery to ensure a focus on community-led planning and recovery. Some stakeholders noted the effectiveness of this mechanism, as illustrated by the quote in Box I below. In another case study country, the Resident Coordinator co-hosted a high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue that culminated in a Partnership for Recovery and Resilience.
- (c) **National, multi-stakeholder conferences and events on sustainable development:** In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator effectively co-facilitated a community recovery conference with the government, engaging approximately 500 stakeholders comprised of United Nations agencies, civil society, local authorities and the private sector to discuss recovery programming and policy. The Resident Coordinator in this country also successfully partnered with the government to launch national consultations in preparation for the Transforming Education Summit.

Box I

“I was really happy that I was part of the durable solutions working group. This is an initiative of [the Resident Coordinator] together with United Nations agencies and INGOs and NGOs. I think [this country] is a lesson learned. It’s hard to work together but in [our country], here we are; we have a big country with different regions and sometimes we really need this sustainability, this nexus approach, but still continue and help with the humanitarian response.”

Civil society representative

The Resident Coordinator system further supported governments on the development of national agendas and visions for the Sustainable Development Goals, facilitated progress reporting and coordinated input to national reports, strategies and policies

28. Most government officials surveyed (74 per cent) reported that the Resident Coordinator system supported them in setting a national agenda and vision to advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In both case study countries, Resident Coordinators worked closely

with government counterparts, with and on behalf of the country team, to support the development of national strategies for progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of multi-dimensional crises, incorporating approaches to addressing immediate needs, recovery, resilience and longer-term development. In one case study country, in the context of stagnating and deteriorating sustainable development results, the Resident Coordinator system supported the government to draft a Sustainable Development Goals Rescue Plan.

29. The Resident Coordinator system also supported progress reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals. In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator system organized consultations with 15 ministries and 30 government agencies and entities on Sustainable Development Goal indicators, connecting government officials with relevant United Nations entities to support indicator reviews. In another case study country, the Resident Coordinator system played a key role to support the Voluntary National Review process, coordinating country team inputs, supporting the national consultation process and providing direct technical support for report drafting, as shown in the quote in Box II below. In this line, eight government officials from seven countries and territories surveyed noted Resident Coordinator support to Voluntary National Review processes.

Box II

“Without advocacy at that level [from the Resident Coordinator’s Office], I don’t know where the SDGs would be. A week and a half ago, the country prepared its first VNR with very strong coordination from the Resident Coordinator’s Office. I can say, despite the challenges, you can see importance and relevance and how they’ve dealt with humanitarian [challenges] and put the SDGs afloat (...). Really quite effective in quite a complex context.”

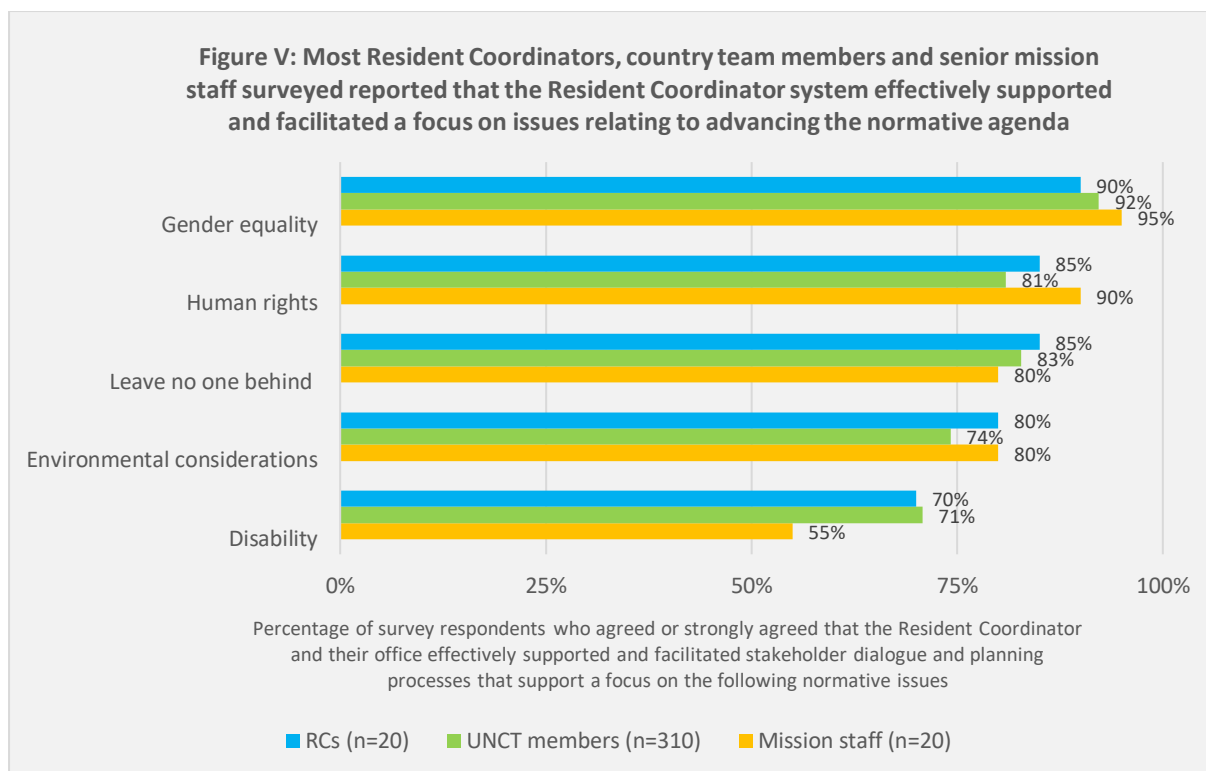
Country team member

30. Additionally, the Resident Coordinator system supported governments by effectively coordinating United Nations input into national reports, strategies and policies. Government officials interviewed in one case study country described the critical Resident Coordinator system role to coordinate contributions from country team members and to provide feedback on draft national and regional strategies that included a focus on recovery. Government officials surveyed further highlighted Resident Coordinator system support through technical assistance and by connecting the government with relevant United Nations agencies. These findings corresponded with 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review data, where 96 per cent of governments agreed that the Resident Coordinator effectively led the country team’s strategic support for national plans and priorities.

The Resident Coordinator system additionally effectively advocated to advance the normative agenda

31. As shown in Figure V, the Resident Coordinator system advanced cross-cutting norms such as gender and human rights. In one case study country, the Resident Coordinator co-hosted an international women’s conference with the government that created momentum leading to the government signing a key regional human rights Protocol. A civil society representative in this country emphasized the critical leadership and convening role of the Resident Coordinator in that regard. This aligned with quadrennial comprehensive policy review data, where 92 per cent of country team members agreed that “the Resident Coordinator fosters a coherent and strategic engagement with government counterparts on the United Nation’s normative agenda”.²⁷

²⁷ Data relates to the 31 countries within the scope of the evaluation only.



The Resident Coordinator system effectively supported a focus on sustainable development in United Nations programming in complex settings to support longer-term development goals

32. In both case study countries, the Resident Coordinator supported joined-up planning that included a focus on recovery, resilience and longer-term development programming. In addition, the Resident Coordinator system ensured joined-up approaches through area-based programming initiatives and collective programme mapping tools. Box III below highlights some key activity areas and outcomes of Resident Coordinator system support and leadership in the two case study countries.²⁸

BOX III: CASE STUDY SPOTLIGHT	
Legend: Case study 1 Case study 2 	
ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT	OUTCOMES
JOINED-UP PLANNING	
In the immediate aftermath of a national crisis, the Resident Coordinator system ensured that the Transitional Framework incorporated longer-term development approaches alongside the immediate response.	Enhanced collaboration amongst United Nations development and humanitarian actors leading to a Transitional Framework that successfully incorporated approaches to recovery alongside the humanitarian response to ensure a positive development trajectory.
The Resident Coordinator convened humanitarian and country team members at a joint retreat to discuss core priorities for the next Cooperation Framework, in line with the rapidly evolving country context.	A collective understanding of the evolving context to inform resilience-focused programming and strategic planning.

²⁸ Outcomes listed were a result of the collective work of the country team, with leadership and coordination provided by the Resident Coordinator system

AREA-BASED PROGRAMMING	
The Resident Coordinator co-led national, regional and local consultations to identify 12 communities that were suitable for a pilot area-based programme joining up the humanitarian response with recovery initiatives. In close collaboration with relevant country team and humanitarian country team members, and programme Steering Committee members, the Resident Coordinator system jointly conceptualized the programme and managed its operationalization.	Community recovery, including the reconstruction of critical local infrastructure (such as schools and homes) and the provision of social services. The successful pilot initiative was due to be scaled to 20 communities.
The Resident Coordinator system oversaw the coordination of a sub-regional programme that engaged the humanitarian country team and the peacekeeping mission, in partnership with one lead United Nations agency per sub-region.	Joined-up flood response programming incorporating both the humanitarian response and mitigation.
COLLECTIVE PROGRAMME MAPPING TOOLS	
The Resident Coordinator system contributed to the development of a joint analytical framework for national data on displacement, as part of an agency-led Data for Solutions initiative.	Data on displacement informed community-level planning on recovery.
On behalf of the country team and Heads of Cooperation group members, the Resident Coordinator system commissioned a development consultant firm to construct a virtual dashboard to map all development cooperation projects in the country. The dashboard compiled data from UN INFO (including on United Nations programmes and activities by entity, region, theme, funding and resource allocation) and from donors and civil society (for activities that are not implemented by the United Nations).	Virtual dashboard launched with visual mapping of development cooperation activities to support programming and the complementarity of interventions amongst the United Nations, donors, civil society and the government.

- C. Despite efforts to maintain a focus on sustainable development in complex settings, progress was hindered by challenging operating contexts, the prioritization of more immediate humanitarian needs and limited host government capacity to focus on development work

Various crises created a challenging operating environment

33. Resident Coordinators and country team members in complex settings identified recurring crises related to conflict, insecurity, political instability and climate events as the most significant challenge to maintaining a focus on sustainable development. These crises rendered highly challenging operating environments and severely disrupted progress towards, and programming on, sustainable development. Most of the 31 countries evaluated faced multi-dimensional crises and a stalling or backsliding of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, with 28 recording an average Sustainable Development Goal index score of 56 per cent compared to an average of 64 per

cent in all other countries in which the Resident Coordinator system was present.²⁹ Furthermore, 31 per cent of Resident Coordinator offices cited political and security issues as a significant challenge to their work.

Resources and programming efforts were often directed towards immediate needs and the humanitarian response

34. Humanitarian crises have increasingly shaped the priorities of the Resident Coordinator system. Workload analysis survey respondents in the 31 complex countries reported that 41 per cent of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator's overall work was allocated to humanitarian coordination, 36 per cent to development work and 23 per cent to peace and security issues.³⁰ Additionally, 35 per cent of Resident Coordinator offices reported an increased focus on humanitarian work due to significant events since January 2019.³¹ This trend was illustrated in the two case studies, where Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators allocated a substantial portion of their time to humanitarian issues. Specifically, the Resident Coordinator system focus on humanitarian issues involved leading coordination efforts to establish the United Nations humanitarian presence and response, ensuring staff safety as Designated Official and coordinating United Nations activities and the provision of supplies and services.

35. Further, some stakeholders noted limited donor funding as a significant obstacle to progress on sustainable development in the context of the Resident Coordinator's ability to deliver on its mandate, with funds at times being redirected towards humanitarian efforts and aid tied to emergency responses. The quote in Box IV below is illustrative of such obstacles.

Box IV

"This is a problem that exists in many other countries in conflict situations where you have a humanitarian space and development space but how do you align using the same pots of money made available by one single donor for example. Here, the problem is that the village that was liberated yesterday can be taken again tomorrow and the risk appetite for certain donors to invest in those places towards more sustainable solutions is a bit more complicated."

Resident Coordinator office staff member

In complex settings, governments had limited resource and institutional capacity to focus on development work, and their engagement with the United Nations development system varied

36. As noted above, governments in complex settings faced multi-dimensional crises, high rates of poverty and low or receding economic growth, limiting their resource capacity. In these contexts, most national resources were often allocated to immediate humanitarian needs, basic services and infrastructure and, in conflict settings, security and defence. This detracted from the resources spent more specifically on development. A Cooperation Framework evaluation highlighted the challenge of

²⁹ [Sustainable Development Report 2024](#). The Sustainable Development Report is an independent, expert assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The report is published by the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#). The Sustainable Development Goals index score is presented on a scale of 0 to 100 and can be interpreted as a percentage towards optimal performance on the Sustainable Development Goals. Data was unavailable for 36 out of 162 countries and territories in which the Resident Coordinator system is present. For countries defined as complex settings, data was unavailable for 3/31 countries.

³⁰ 36 per cent of Resident Coordinator time was spent on development work and 23 per cent on peace and security related issues.

³¹ Offices reported this increase despite the existence of the United Nations humanitarian architecture to support the Humanitarian Coordinator on coordination of the humanitarian response.

maintaining a focus on development work when resources were directed towards active conflicts and crises. The quote in Box V below illustrates this point.

Box V

“Sustainable development is a tool for peacetime. How can we talk about it when you have missile strikes every day? When the country is in war, resilience is more important than sustainable development.”

Government official

37. Further, poor economic conditions in complex settings have limited governments’ institutional capacity, impacting their ability to more meaningfully engage with the United Nations on development work. Some Resident Coordinator offices surveyed, as well as Cooperation Framework evaluation reports, identified inadequate institutional and technical capacity and weak inter-ministerial coordination within governments as major barriers to advancing sustainable development. These findings corresponded with governance effectiveness statistics confirming this trend, with the average governance effectiveness score for 30 of the 31 countries within the evaluation scope at the 15th percentile, compared to the 56th percentile for the other 183 countries and territories listed.³²

38. High attrition in government also weakened relations with the Resident Coordinator system, disrupting momentum to build and sustain relations on development initiatives. This issue was highlighted in one case study country and seven Cooperation Framework evaluations. Another factor that added complexity was the development cooperation engagement in politically estranged contexts following an unconstitutional change of government. Since 2019, six of the 31 countries assessed had experienced an unconstitutional change of government.

D. While largely perceived to have sufficient resources to manage internal coordination processes, the Resident Coordinator system was not always adequately structured or capacitated to effectively fulfil its expanded portfolio and meet additional demands in complex settings

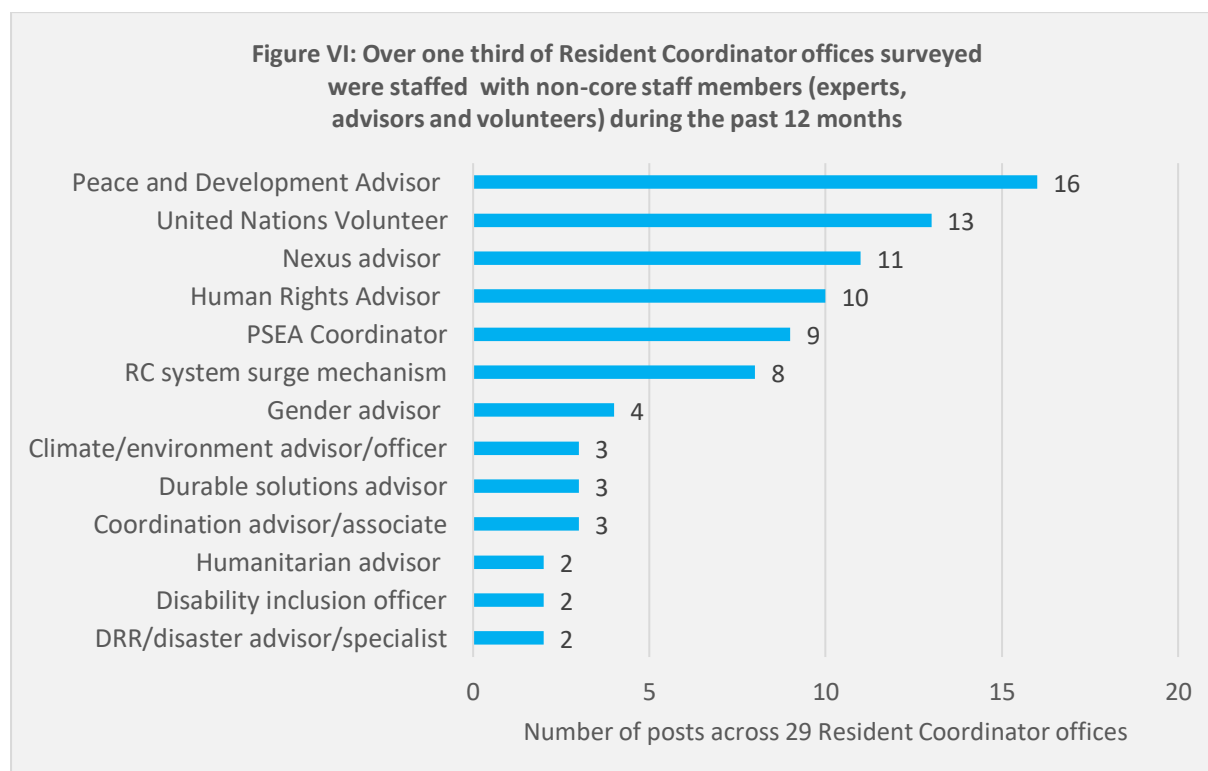
The Resident Coordinator system competently managed mandated internal coordination processes, with additional advisory posts supporting some aspects of its work in complex settings

39. Capacity for internal coordination between humanitarian, development and peace and security actors was generally considered adequate. A small majority of country team members and mission staff surveyed (56 and 52 per cent, respectively) agreed that the Resident Coordinator system had sufficient capacity, including staff and expertise, to support coordination between these actors. In one case study country, stakeholders interviewed confirmed the Resident Coordinator system’s ability to service internal coordination mechanisms and fulfil process-related work.

40. Some Resident Coordinator offices were also staffed with supplementary non-core staff post-holders, including expert advisors, to support the Resident Coordinator system and country team; 55 per cent of Resident Coordinator offices in these settings had a Peace and Development Advisor and

³² The World Bank governance effectiveness indicator measures the quality of: Public services; the civil service and its independence; policy formulation; and implementation and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. Data was unavailable for 1/31 countries. <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/worldwide-governance-indicators/series/GE.EST>

45 per cent were supported by United Nations Volunteers, as shown in Figure VI.³³ Non-core staff posts were often characterized as advisory functions to provide the Resident Coordinator and country team with expertise on issues such as working with and across United Nations humanitarian, development and peace and security actors, human rights, gender, climate and durable solutions. These non-core staff members were commonly funded through local cost-sharing agreements, locally mobilized resources or by an individual donor or United Nations agency, fund or programme. Several non-core staff members were seconded to Resident Coordinator offices from agencies. Further, some offices received additional short-term capacity through the Resident Coordinator system surge mechanism.³⁴



Despite additional non-core posts, the Resident Coordinator system still lacked sufficient capacity to meet demands and deliver against its expanded portfolio in complex settings

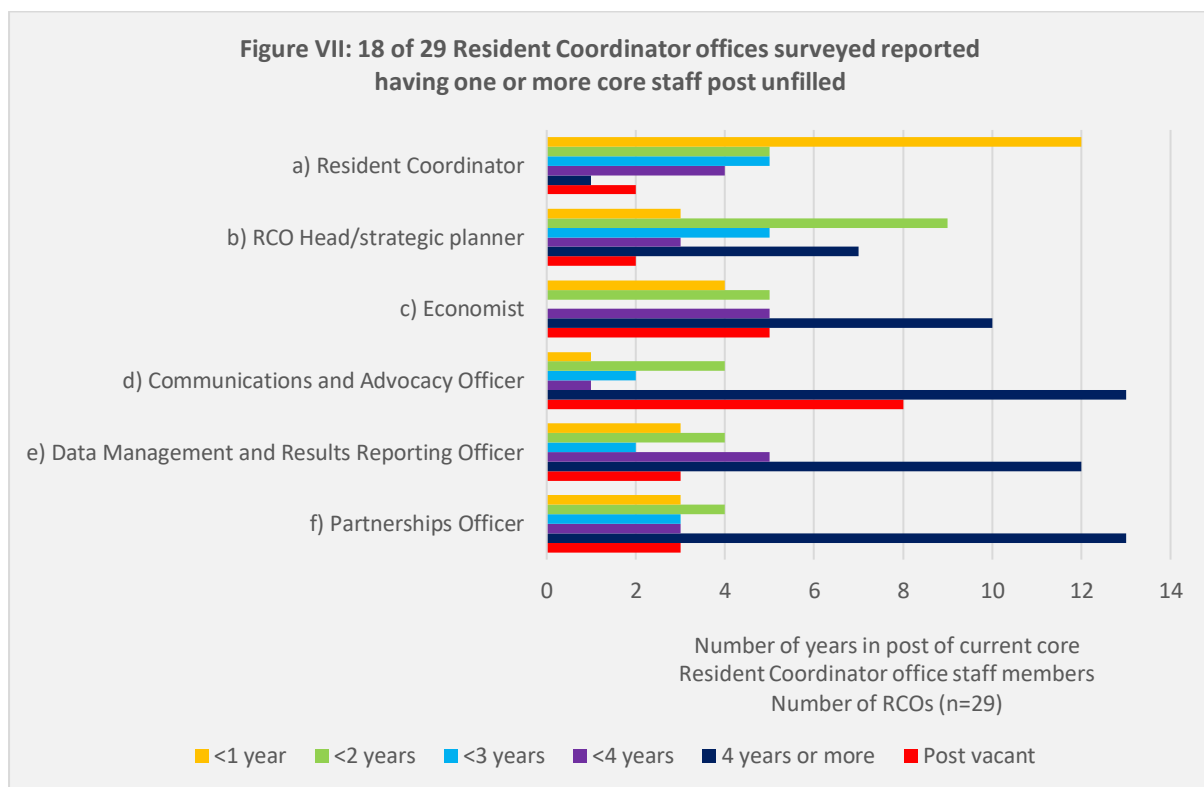
41. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of workload analysis survey respondents indicated that their Resident Coordinator offices had insufficient capacity (staffing and expertise) to support country teams and effectively fulfil the expanded portfolio and meet demands in complex settings. Case study country staff interviewed, and 38 per cent of country team members and 47 per cent of mission staff surveyed, also reported insufficient capacity.

³³ The [Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme](#) on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention supports Resident Coordinators and country teams through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors, who serve as shared assets benefitting Resident Coordinators, the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and wider country teams and undertake a range of analytical, advisory and facilitative functions. No further information was provided about the humanitarian advisor posts.

³⁴ The Resident Coordinator system surge mechanism was established in 2022 to enable the rapid deployment of expert staff to meet short-term capacity needs in emergency settings. The surge mechanism consists of a rapid-release surge fund from the special purpose trust fund, surge capacities through seven senior roving development coordination officers and a collaborative initiative with the Department of Operational Support to establish standing surge capacity pools with United Nations Secretariat staff. In 2023, surge capacity support was provided to 10 countries and territories in the evaluation subset, as follows: Burkina Faso, Niger, DRC, Eritrea, Iraq, Myanmar, Syria, Mali, Sudan, Occupied Palestinian territory.

42. The following four main types of capacity gaps were reported:

- (a) **Inconsistency in filling core staff posts:** As shown in Figure VII below, core staff posts were not consistently filled. Of the 23 vacant posts across the 29 Resident Coordinator offices responding to the workload analysis questionnaire, 12 had been vacant for more than one year and four posts for more than two years. The highest number of vacancies were reported for the communications and economist posts. Staff reported that they had assumed additional roles and responsibilities to compensate for vacant posts and to backstop colleagues who were on four-week rest and recuperation cycles. This resulted in staff working extensive hours to meet demand. At times, resource constraints led to recruitment being stalled for certain posts, or post downgrading from international to national staff member level. Post downgrading impacted timely recruitment due to high competition for qualified national staff.



- (b) **Resident Coordinator vacancies:** Some Resident Coordinator positions remained vacant for extended periods, challenging coordination efforts. In one case study country, the position had been vacant for approximately 20 months since 2019. This undermined coordination efforts since the interim Resident Coordinator could not fully assume all responsibilities assigned under the Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General posts at the same time as fulfilling their role as an agency Head. Some government officials advocated for longer terms in office for senior United Nations staff members, including Resident Coordinators.
- (c) **Insufficient number of staff members overall to meet demand:** Most Resident Coordinators, nearly half of mission staff and over one third of country team members surveyed (70, 47 and 38 per cent, respectively) disagreed that Resident Coordinator system staffing was sufficient to enable it to effectively conduct its work. Respondents emphasized that the volume and complexity of demands in these settings far exceeded staff capacities.
- (d) **Lack of expertise in particular functional areas:** Three-quarters (77 per cent) of workload analysis survey respondents indicated a lack of specialized expertise in particular functional

areas. Additionally, 70 per cent of Resident Coordinators surveyed disagreed that their office was able to leverage sufficient expertise to effectively conduct its core work. Key areas identified as lacking expertise included:

- **Communications:** Enhanced communications capacities were needed in complex settings, including expertise in public relations and media management, strategic communications, crisis communications, social media and content generation.
- **Coordination:** Enhanced coordination capacities were needed in complex settings to support: (i) multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms; (ii) United Nations humanitarian, development and peace efforts; and (iii) decentralised or sub-national coordination (due to the expanded United Nations operations in crisis contexts).
- **Administration and operations:** Stronger administrative capacity in crisis settings were required due to the high demand in multiple administrative and operational areas (including human resources, finance, procurement, risk management, logistics and general administrative support).
- **Normative and functional areas:** Greater capacity was needed in several normative and functional areas, including climate and the environment, human rights, disability, gender and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Data analysis and information management:** Strengthened capacity in data analysis and insights, joint analysis, impact analysis, monitoring, data and information management were required.

43. In view of these capacity gaps, some stakeholders suggested the need to expand support provided through the Resident Coordinator system surge mechanism. For example, some Resident Coordinator system staff surveyed, and interviewed in case studies, suggested the need to strengthen surge capacities, prioritize complex settings for surge support and streamline processes to enable the rapid deployment of staff when needed. Some Resident Coordinator system staff interviewed and surveyed, and government officials interviewed, also noted a lack of financial resources for Resident Coordinator offices.

In the context of resource constraints and increased demands due to complex needs, the staffing structure in complex settings was not fit for purpose

44. As noted in paragraph 42, resource constraints curtailed recruitment for core staff posts, negatively impacting on the work the Resident Coordinator system. Further, national disasters, crises and mission transition contexts generated additional work for Resident Coordinators and their offices. Sixty-five per cent of Resident Coordinator offices surveyed reported an increased workload and extended staff member working hours due to significant national events, such as a national disaster or crisis. This included an increased focus on the following areas of work:

- (a) **Security**, including the expansive role in complex settings to ensure the safety and security of United Nations staff, assets and operations.
- (b) **Resource mobilization and management**, including fundraising for immediate and protracted crises and managing joint funds (including, in case study countries, managing the Peacebuilding Fund and a Community Recovery Fund).
- (c) **Facilitating high-level missions, delegate visits and briefing requests**, including preparing briefing materials, managing logistics and hosting frequent high-level missions from the United Nations headquarters and Member State delegations.

- (d) **Fulfilling the public-facing and diplomatic role** as the highest-ranking representative of the United Nations at country level, including engaging with and across the government and speaking publicly about the humanitarian impacts of conflict and man-made crises. In one case study country, government officials noted the important role of the Resident Coordinator to support diplomatic efforts whilst publicly acknowledging the grave impacts of the crisis on local populations.
- (e) **Supporting mission transitions** with the assumption of additional responsibilities in contexts of mission disengagement and withdrawal.

45. As a result of insufficient capacity, increased workloads and coordination needs in complex settings, 58 per cent of Resident Coordinator offices surveyed reported that the Resident Coordinator system staffing structure was not fit for purpose. Resident Coordinator system staff, country team members and partners interviewed and surveyed described four main challenges:

- (a) **Lack of institutionalized structure for development coordination.** Over half (52 per cent) of Resident Coordinator offices surveyed, and some case study stakeholders interviewed, noted that the current coordination structure did not meet the contextual requirements for both recovery and development coordination in complex settings. Some stakeholders noted that this resulted from the lack of an institutionalized coordination structure for development coordination (in comparison to the more structured cluster system for humanitarian work), including, for example, the lack of sub-national coordination capacity of the Resident Coordinator system. These views are exemplified by the quote in Box VI below.

Box VI

“You look at the capacities of the Resident Coordinator office [...] it’s nowhere close to what you would actually need to effectively coordinate a billion-dollar recovery response. [...] One of the challenges that we have, I think as DCO and as the development coordination system in general, is that unlike on humanitarian, we don’t have this institutionalized or a system with high structures of coordination.”

Resident Coordinator office staff member

- (b) **Insufficient human resource for the increased and expansive scope of work in complex settings.** Resident Coordinator offices surveyed and staff interviewed agreed that office capacity was not commensurate with the workload and that the staffing structure had not been sufficiently adapted to multi-dimensional crisis settings. Some of these staff members also commented on the breadth of the Resident Coordinator system staff member terms of references (that detailed staff member roles and responsibilities) and the high burden placed on individual staff members in these settings.
- (c) **Lack of sustainable approaches to expanding capacity.** Several Resident Coordinator offices surveyed reported challenges relating to local and reactive approaches to non-core post recruitment to address critical capacity gaps, including the labour-intensive nature of recurrent recruitment exercises and post filling (including through secondments and internships) and the impact on the Resident Coordinator office’s ability to provide support for longer-term development initiatives.
- (d) **Lack of adequate support for Resident Coordinators to fulfil the roles and responsibilities that accompany additional designations.** Resident Coordinators in complex settings managed substantial and expansive workloads. At times, roles and responsibilities extended beyond and across individual post designations including, for example, where the Resident Coordinator office may have supported aspects of coordination relating to the humanitarian

response and security in active crises and emergencies. Some case study stakeholders interviewed advocated for a Deputy Resident Coordinator post due to this expansive, and at times public-facing, nature of the Resident Coordinator role in these settings; they suggested that this role would provide additional support for high-level engagements and allow for increased Resident Coordinator system support to development work.

V. Conclusion

46. Over the last six years following the reform of the Resident Coordinator system, the world has witnessed an unprecedented level of humanitarian disasters and conflicts that have acutely affected the development trajectories of countries facing multi-dimensional crises. These crises have caused untold human suffering and loss of life, significant population displacement and widespread damage to infrastructure and institutions, creating challenges to the operating environment within which the United Nations works.

47. While the Resident Coordinator system has enabled a more coherent and effective United Nations, considering the evolving nature of these challenges, the one-size fits all structural paradigm for Resident Coordinator offices may not be optimal to meet the additional and expansive mandates and accountabilities assigned to Resident Coordinators in such complex environments. As such, the development coordination system envisaged by the United Nations development system reform requires further adaptation to meet the specific needs and contextual realities in each of the 31 countries assessed in this evaluation.

48. With just five more years until 2030, there is a unique opportunity to appropriately equip the development coordination system to provide even greater support to host governments in strengthening the alignment of humanitarian and development programming, and to ensure an increased focus on recovery, resilience and sustainable development in complex settings. This would prevent further backsliding on the development gains made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and support countries on development trajectories through more resilient, adaptive, sustainable and inclusive solutions to multi-dimensional crises.

VI. Recommendations

OIOS-IED makes four important recommendations to the Development Coordination Office, all of which the Development Coordination Office has accepted.

Recommendation 1 (Result D)

49. To address the need for strengthened staff capacities in Resident Coordinator offices in complex settings, **the Development Coordination Office should conduct a staffing review, including drafting an options paper on resourcing, to ensure an appropriate footprint for development coordination in such settings.**

This review should detail parameters for the optimum Resident Coordinator office staffing structure in complex settings, and context-specific staffing requirements for core (i.e. SPTF-funded) - in addition to the current five positions - and non-core advisory and supplementary posts, as well as surge capacity or standby capacity options, to enable Resident Coordinators to effectively fulfil their mandates and multiple accountabilities in these settings. In so doing, the Office may wish to consider:

- The capacity gaps and unique staffing needs of specific complex contexts, including additional minimum advisory staff needed to fulfil the expanded roles and responsibilities of

Resident Coordinators in complex settings, including in the fields of crisis communications, coordination (including sub-national where needed), administration, normative issues, Sustainable Development Goals policy and financing, data analysis and information management.

- The capacity gaps in multi-dimensional crisis settings where there is, or has recently been, a peacekeeping or special political mission; and where capacities may be required to support mission transitions/liquidations, to address mandates previously assigned to a PKO or SPM and/or to assure positive mission legacy.
- The elaboration of options to ensure predictable resourcing of such advisory and supplementary positions, including through joint programmes, agency secondments, standby capacities and rosters of experts.

Indicator(s) of achievement: (i) Staffing review conducted, and options paper drafted; (ii) staffing review and options paper submitted to the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for further consideration and follow up.

Recommendation 2 (Result D)

50. To address the challenge of resources and programming efforts often prioritizing immediate needs, **the Development Coordination Office should collate, develop and share good practices and approaches on sustainable development funding and financing with Resident Coordinators in complex settings.** This may include:

- The leveraging of humanitarian, development and peace and security funding streams, including pooled funds, for a coherent United Nations system-wide offer under Resident Coordinator leadership in complex settings.
- Leveraging data to inform funding and financing discussions, including analysing how current funding streams align with in-country humanitarian, development and peace and security programming priorities.
- Approaches to strategic dialogue with multilateral and bilateral donors on continued investments in sustainable development in complex settings to support Resident Coordinators and country teams to deliver against their mandate of supporting national efforts to reduce humanitarian vulnerabilities, mitigate risks, promote sustainable development pathways and realize the 2030 Agenda.

Indicator(s) of achievement: Best practice approaches collated, developed and shared with Resident Coordinators in complex settings.

Recommendation 3 (Results A and D)

51. To further support Resident Coordinator and country team efforts to maintain a focus on sustainable development, and to strengthen collaboration with existing United Nations data analysis capacities in support of more effective approaches to multi-dimensional risk analysis and risk-informed planning, **the Development Coordination Office should liaise and coordinate with relevant departments and entities to surface good practice in joined-up risk analysis and risk-informed planning** in complex settings. The Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian-Development Collaboration could be a useful forum for this effort.

Indicator(s) of achievement: Good practice note relating to approach to joined-up risk analysis and risk-informed planning issued.

Recommendation 4 (Results A and D)

52. To further address systemic bottlenecks impacting Resident Coordinator and country team efforts to maintain a focus on sustainable development, **the Development Coordination Office should revise relevant elements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group guidance on humanitarian-development-peace collaboration and planning in exceptional circumstances to include agreed approaches to, and good practices on, joint analysis and complementary planning and programming.** This should be developed in collaboration with relevant United Nations humanitarian and peace and security actors and be informed by the good practice noted referenced in Recommendation 3 above.

Indicator(s) of achievement: Revised United Nations Sustainable Development Group guidance on humanitarian-development-peace collaboration and planning in exceptional circumstances.

Annex I. Evaluand management response

In the present annex, OIOS sets out the full text of comments received from the United Nations Development Coordination Office in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee. The comments have been produced as received.



TO: Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division, Office of Internal Oversight Services
DATE: 19 December 2024
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

FROM: Oscar Fernández-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination

SUBJECT: **Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Resident Coordinator System in complex settings**
OBJET: **Coordinador System in complex settings**

1. I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Resident Coordinator System (RC system) in complex settings.
2. I welcome the report's confirmation that the RC system has effectively enabled collaboration between United Nations development, humanitarian and peace and security actors for more coherent programming in complex settings, while ensuring a continued focus on advancing sustainable development and supporting national development priorities aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This is an important testament to the added value of the UN development system reform and the relevance of the reinvigorated RC system in fragile and crisis-affected situations.
3. I also appreciate the report's recognition of the very challenging contexts that the RC system must navigate in complex settings, where recurring crises often disrupt efforts to advance sustainable development. In the same vein, I acknowledge the report's insights on how crises affect the channeling of institutional, human and financial resources of both host governments and the UN toward immediate needs.
4. I particularly take note of the finding that while the RC system is effectively managing internal coordination processes to advance sustainable development, it is not adequately capacitated to meet additional demands related to the expanded portfolio of UN system mandates landing on RCs shoulders in complex settings.
5. After careful review, I am pleased to accept the four recommendations set forth in the draft report.

6. On Recommendation 1 for DCO to conduct a staffing review for complex settings, and draft an options paper for resourcing, I confirm we will launch such a review imminently, for submission to the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).
7. With regard to Recommendations 2 and 3 for DCO to surface and share good practices on sustainable development funding and financing and on joined-up risk analysis and risk-informed planning in complex settings, DCO will be happy to facilitate such an exercise, in close collaboration with relevant UN entities and will indeed bring these recommendations to the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, to ensure a system-wide approach.
8. Finally, on Recommendation 4, I am pleased to inform that an informal working group consisting of dual-mandated UN entities has already been tasked to initiate work in January 2025 to review and update relevant guidance on collaboration across the areas of development, humanitarian response and peace and security as part of the overall revision of the UNSDG Cooperation Framework guidance which began earlier this year.
9. I would like to thank you and your team for undertaking this evaluation through a fully consultative process and with a collaborative approach. I believe that the findings and recommendations will help us further strengthen our support to Member States and as well as the collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors to enable the RC system to advance a coherent offer of support in the most complex settings.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General, OIOS
Ms. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, Director, Sustainable Development Unit, Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, Deputy Director, Development Coordination Office
Ms. Helena Fraser, Director of Policy and Programme, Development Coordination Office
Ms. Natalie Angela Neil, Evaluation Team Lead, Inspection and Evaluation Division, OIOS