

**Evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals**

13 June 2019

Assignment No: IED-19-001



## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organisation. 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 Organisation;” (General Assembly [Resolution 48/218 B](#)).*

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## I. Introduction and objective

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) identified the thematic evaluation of the preparedness, policy coherence and early results of United Nations (UN) entities' support to Member States with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the basis of a risk assessment designed to identify Secretariat thematic evaluation priorities.
2. The general frame of reference for OIOS is in General Assembly resolutions 48/218B, 54/244, 9/272, as well as Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/273, by which OIOS is authorized to initiate, carry out and report on any action it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. OIOS evaluation is stipulated in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.<sup>1</sup>
3. The overall evaluation objective was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the extent to which UN entities have: i) prepared themselves to maximize the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of their individual and collective contributions to the SDGs; ii) achieved policy coherence and iii) achieved early results in their support to governments.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation topic emerged from a thematic risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation was conducted in conformity with norms and standards for evaluation in the UN System.<sup>4</sup>
4. The comments of the 30 UN entities within the evaluation's scope were sought on the draft report and taken into account in the final report. The formal responses are included in Annex I.

## II. Background

### *2030 agenda for sustainable development*

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a culmination of the Post-2015 Agenda Process which ended with the UN Summit on Sustainable Development - a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly - in September 2015. The outcome of the Summit was the document "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." The General Assembly formally adopted the Agenda, and its 17 SDGs, in A/RES/70/1. Derived from a series of intergovernmental and non-intergovernmental inputs, the 2030 Agenda is universal and inclusive, in that it is applicable to all countries and pledges that "no one will be left behind." The Secretary-General issued two reports in 2017 presenting his vision on the repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. The reports, which were welcomed by Member States in General Assembly resolution 72/279, recognized that the UN "should not be doing everything, everywhere," but should rather "be well-positioned to advise and provide or broker technical support to Governments across all areas of sustainable development."<sup>5</sup>

### *SDGs*

6. The 17 multi-disciplinary and interconnected SDGs are a key component of the 2030 Agenda. These goals entail 169 associated targets, which were agreed following inclusive intergovernmental negotiations. Table 1 lists all 17 SDGs.

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<sup>1</sup> [ST/SGB/2018/3](#), p. 15, Regulation 7.1.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex II for entities and associated acronyms.

<sup>3</sup> Inception Paper for Evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals, IED-18-012, 12 September 2018.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), 2005.

<sup>5</sup> A/72/124-E/2018/3, para 52.

**Table 1: SDGs**

SDG	
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

7. The UN system supports Member States with their implementation of the SDGs as well as with monitoring and reporting on progress achieved. Within these broad parameters, UN entities' SDG-related roles and responsibilities vary considerably, depending on their mandates and the specific accountabilities assigned to them by Member States. The UN system's support to the implementation of the SDGs falls within a broad framework encompassing the following four work streams:

- **Normative work** – through the servicing of key SDG-specific intergovernmental bodies, convening expert panels and other fora that facilitate dialogue and problem-solving, and providing advocacy to a variety of stakeholder groups.
- **Analytical work** – through the development of analyses related to a given SDG, or inter-linkages among multiple SDGs; for example, to provide analytical expertise in support of SDG-specific intergovernmental dialogue and decision-making.

- **Technical work** – through the provision of technical expertise related to each of the sectoral areas targeted within a given SDG, and to their programmatic interlinkages, including the facilitation of access to expertise which might lend itself to innovative approaches to tackling the SDGs.
- **Operational work** – through direct support provided by entities themselves or through their implementing partners, in alignment with Member State SDG needs as articulated in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and other documentation.

### III. Methodology

8. The evaluation assessed 30 UN entities<sup>6</sup> and employed a mixed-method quantitative and qualitative approach, factoring in UN development system and other reform initiatives underway, using the following data sources, with data collection taking place between September 2018 and March 2019:

- Structured document review:** systematic assessment of over 150 documents, including UN entity General Assembly approved budget fascicles and strategic frameworks, other strategic work plans, performance reports and related documents.
- Interviews:** 26 structured interviews with staff throughout the UN system, including all five Regional Commission Executive Secretaries;
- Surveys:** a web-based survey of 27 UN entities in the evaluation scope (because of their primary support function, DM<sup>7</sup>, DSS, DGACM, UNON, and UNOV were excluded from the survey) and a web-based survey of their partners. The first survey, which will be referred to as the evaluand survey, was administered in October 2018 and 21 entities responded, for a 78 per cent response rate. The second survey, which will be referred to as the partner survey, was administered in January 2019 to 1,014 partners (individual respondents) identified in the first survey, and 264 responded, for a 26 per cent response rate;
- Direct observation:** of 6 events that focused on support for implementation and monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the SDGs;
- Case studies:** three case studies of Mexico, Uganda, and Bhutan. These case studies were identified by UN entity interviewees as exemplifying good early practices in implementing the SDGs with the support of the UN system; and
- Secondary data analysis:** of the 2017 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) UN entity survey and the UN System SDGs Action Online Database.

9. The evaluation faced some limitations:

- at the time of this evaluation, implementation of UN reform was in progress and thus data collection occurred during a time of significant fluidity;

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<sup>6</sup> These 30 entities are those currently included in the OIOS-IED oversight universe (those in the UN Secretariat Strategic Framework and subject to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation -PPBME). This includes: (1) the entities comprising the UN Secretariat; (2) the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); (3) the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and (4) UN Women.

<sup>7</sup> After re-organization: DMSPC and DOS.

- b) the documented changes reported as part of preparedness were assessed in terms of quantity and alignment with the SDGs, but did not include a detailed qualitative assessment of content;
  - c) the selection of case studies was purposive, thus limiting the extent to which case study results can be generalized globally;
  - d) the partner survey achieved a low response rate; and
  - e) the positive early results of SDG support were self-reported and were not independently validated by OIOS.
10. OIOS-IED addressed these limitations by triangulating data from multiple sources for a more robust evidence base.

**IV. Evaluation Results**

**Result A: Most UN entities have taken steps to align the relevance of their work to the 2030 Development Agenda, but the extent of their preparedness to support Member States with the SDGs has varied**

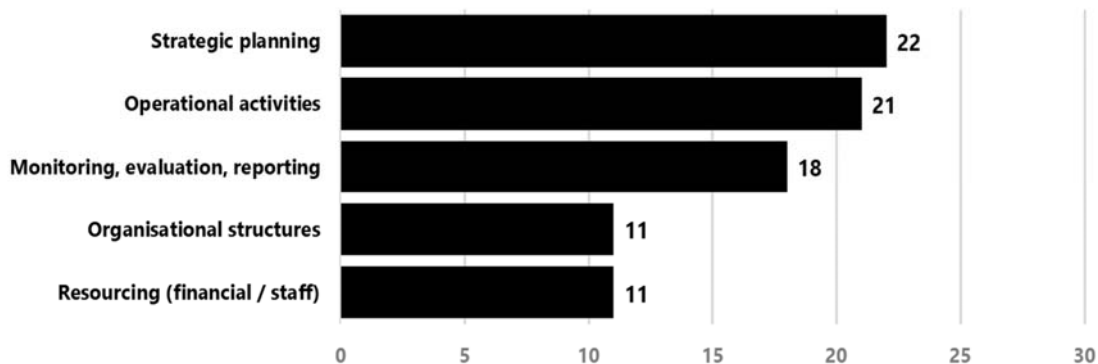
*Most entities have made relevant changes to enhance their overall preparedness to support the SDGs*

11. Factoring in the transformative impetus of the 2030 Agenda and the related reform effort underway, this evaluation assessed the preparedness of individual entities to support Member States to deliver the SDGs by considering the extent to which – when compared to pre-2015 documentation – each entity’s documented strategies, structures and processes had changed to improve alignment with the 2030 Development Agenda. All 30 entities evaluated were assessed to determine whether relevant changes were made to documentation related to:

- a strategic planning process that clearly articulated SDG-related objectives;
- an adequate resource mobilization approach;
- a relevant organizational structure to deliver support;
- fit-for-purpose operational activities; and
- a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to assess results.

12. Of the 30 entities, most (25) had made at least one change to their key documents at the time of the evaluation. Figure A identifies the areas where those changes were made.

**Figure A: Number of UN entities with relevant documented changes in key areas**



**Number of entities where 2030-related change is evident within documentation (compared to pre-2015 baseline)**

13. The overall mandate of an entity must be taken into account when assessing the changes needed to be prepared for supporting national governments with the SDGs. Some entities had a smaller gap to fill between what change was needed pre- and post-2015 since the primary focus of their mandate was already centred around one or more SDGs. For example, UN Habitat documentation was already largely aligned to support Member States with SDG 11, which focuses on promoting work to achieve sustainable cities and communities. Other entities had a mandate that had only a tangential focus on the SDGs and therefore required fewer changes. Many of the administrative support entities, such as DGACM and DM, fell into this category.

14. Further with regard to preparedness, on the evaluand survey nearly half of entities (47 per cent) reported having a roadmap to guide the implementation of specific SDG-related activities. The remaining half reported either having no roadmap (23 per cent) or did not respond (30 per cent).

*Preparedness has been strongest in strategic planning and operational activities, and weakest in organizational structures and resource allocations*

15. Figure A also shows that across all entities, preparedness has been strongest in making needed changes to strategic planning (22 or 73 per cent) and operational modalities (21 or 70 per cent), and weakest in making changes to organizational structures (11 or 37 per cent) and resource allocations (11 or 37 per cent). This was supported by data from the evaluand survey, in which 80 per cent of respondents reported that they had significantly or somewhat changed their strategic planning processes.<sup>8</sup> Examples of changes to strategic plans included UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy 2018-21, which codified alignment between all entity work and specific SDGs, as well as their associated targets. Among examples of changes to operational activities was OOSA's support of a technical advisory mission that was designed around the core criterion of "contribution to achievement of one or more SDGs."

16. Sixty per cent of entities (18 of 30) had documented changes to their monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks. Some noteworthy examples in this regard included: UNCTAD, which aligned most of its activities and results to specific SDGs in its 2017 Annual Report; UNODC which developed a Results Based Management staff manual which integrated 2030 Agenda considerations, and also set up its new web-based evaluation application "Unite Evaluations," to allow reporting of evaluation results at an aggregate level *vis-à-vis* each SDG; and, UN Women, which substantially revised and refocused its results framework on the SDGs.

*The extent of changes made by entities has varied significantly, largely corresponding to the type of SDG support role played by each*

17. Based on the documentation provided, the evaluation identified four categories describing the primary SDG support roles of entities as follows:

1. **Coordination role:** The entity has responsibility for coordination and reporting on 2030 Agenda support delivered by multiple UN entities across multiple SDGs, with coordination defined as the responsibility for ensuring that multiple entities work together as effectively and efficiently as possible at the global, regional, and/or country levels in pursuit of a shared objective.
2. **Thematic lead:** The entity leads efforts to ensure that a specific theme is sufficiently incorporated within 2030 Agenda-related work by, for example, leading efforts to

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<sup>8</sup> Based on a document review analysis that included formal General Assembly-approved strategic frameworks and supplemental strategic planning documentation.

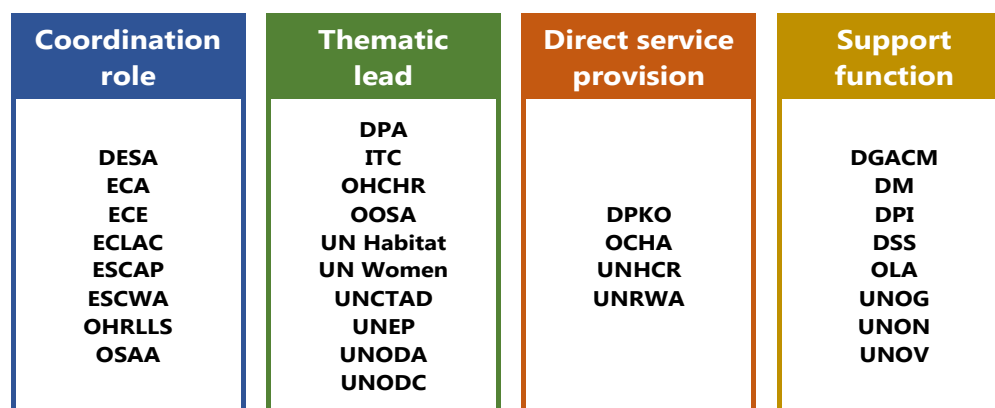


mainstream a theme across SDGs or providing thematic support to Member States and other UN entities.

3. **Direct service provision:** The entity provides essential services in support of SDGs directly to Member States and/or their populations by, for example, providing direct services to refugees or policy advice to Member States.
4. **Support function:** The entity provides administrative, logistical and/or other ‘back-end’ support to UN entities to enable them to undertake their respective SDG roles.

18. Figure B categorizes the **primary** SDG support roles played by the UN entities in the scope of this evaluation. These distinctions, however, are not mutually exclusive, since a single entity can play multiple roles. For example, while DESA performs critical coordination roles, it also supports Member State implementation of the SDGs as a thematic lead on substantive issues and provides direct service support in the form of capacity development activities.

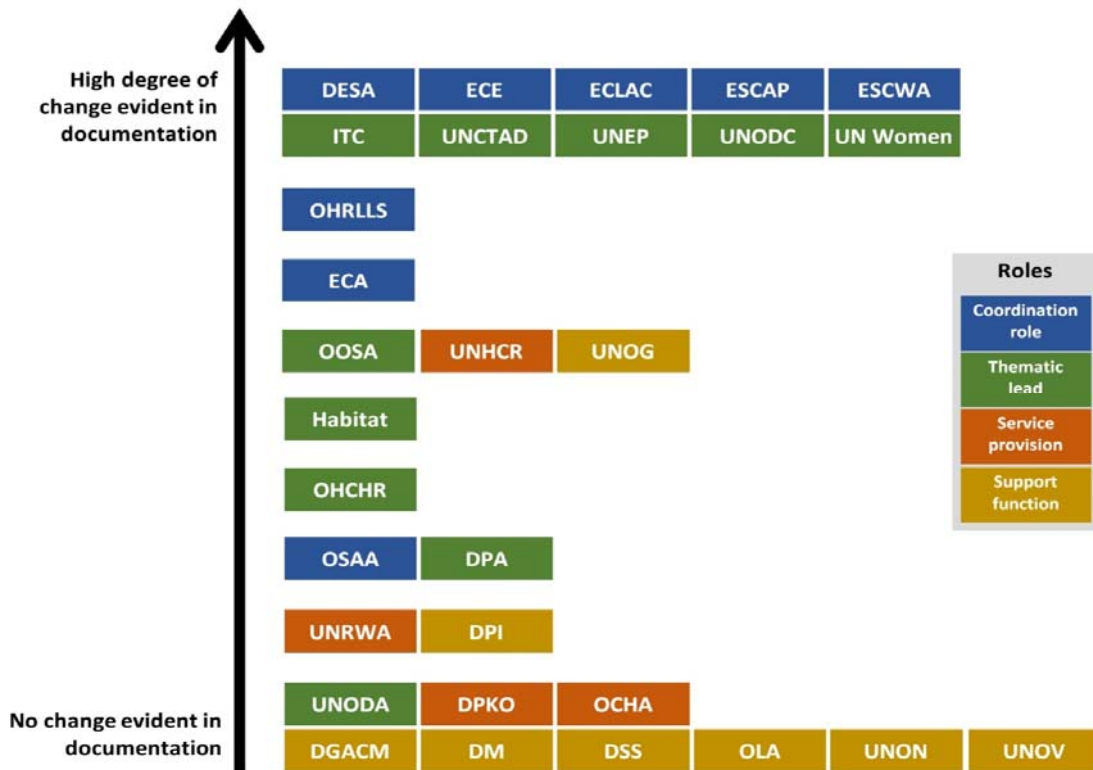
**Figure B: Entity primary SDG support roles** <sup>9</sup>



19. The extent to which entities have made needed changes to their key documents pre-and post-2015 largely corresponds with the primary support role each one plays, as illustrated in Figure C. Entities with a coordination or thematic lead had, for the most part, made the most change. As referenced in para 13 above, the administrative support entities made fewer changes overall, largely due to the more tangential nature of their mandated work in relation to the SDGs and the corresponding reduced need for change.

<sup>9</sup> The composition of some entities changed post-data collection; these include: DPKO is now DPO – Department of Peace Operations; DM is now DMSPC – Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and DOS-Department of Operational Support; DPI is now DGC – Department of Global Communications. UNOG implemented its role somewhat differently than UNON and UNOV; for example, it’s “Strategic Framework SDG Lab 2018-2019” initiative is intended to contribute to multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs.

Figure C: Extent of documented changes made by entities, by primary support role<sup>10</sup>



**Result B: Given their key roles in the 2030 Development Agenda, DESA and the Regional Commissions have made multiple needed changes to their work programmes, but still face challenges in coordinating the work of UN entities around the SDGs**

*DESA and the Regional Commissions have taken positive steps to effectively meet their key SDG support roles*

20. For DESA and the Regional Commissions, supporting implementation of the SDGs has become a dominant strategic driver, resulting in some fundamental strategic shifts and institutional reorientation.

21. The DESA formal budget fascicle and strategic framework documentation indicated that the Department’s overall strategy, and most of its subprogramme strategies, had been explicitly linked to the 2030 Agenda, with the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) designated as the substantive hub for DESA for all SDG-related thematic issues.<sup>11</sup> However, no detailed, substantive standalone SDG strategic roadmap (aside from its formal Strategic Framework) had been developed.

<sup>10</sup> A standard review template was utilized to systematically assess the extent of 2030-related change by reviewing pre- and post-2015 documents; the selection of these documents was validated with each evaluand. See para 8 (a) for types of documentation reviewed. See para 11 for assessment criteria applied. Subsequent to data analysis OCHA, OHCHR, OHRLLS and OOSA provided additional documentation.

<sup>11</sup> As per DESA communication to OIOS April 2018.

Interviews with DESA senior managers did confirm that, in line with the Secretary-General's update of 28 December 2018,<sup>12</sup> the Department was implementing six key reform related key measures:

1. Strengthening thought leadership to respond to the new demands of the 2030 Agenda;
2. Enhancing intergovernmental support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
3. Improving data, statistics and analysis to inform decision-making and enhance collective accountability for results;
4. Stepping up capacities to leverage financing for the implementation of the SDGs;
5. Contributing to the provision of strategic and substantive support to the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system and the new generation UN Country Teams; and
6. Strengthening the strategies and mechanisms of DESA to enhance external communications and strategic partnerships, including with the private sector and academia.

Interviews also confirmed that various structural and other SDG-focused changes were undertaken, some of which are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Examples of DESA SDG-focused changes**

Developed new 'Service Delivery Model' to support more coherent, integrated capacity development account work in context of multi-dimensional 2030 Agenda and established internal mechanism for project coordination. <sup>13</sup>
Supported VNR preparations through global and regional workshops and provided support aimed toward improving both the global indicator framework and evolving national-level indicator frameworks.
Produced annual Voluntary National Review Synthesis Reports summarizing key lessons learned and recommendations shared by countries on various aspects in the implementation of SDGs, as well as a handbook on good practices for VNR preparations.
Changed organizational structure to provide better, more coordinated intergovernmental support and analysis to the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC and the General Assembly; focused DSDG work on SDG thematic level policy analysis, and support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM).
Refocused public administration-oriented activities toward activities in support of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) with a primary focus on effective, inclusive and accountable institutions.

22. All five Regional Commissions made relevant changes to their strategic planning documentation. Specific examples included:

<sup>12</sup> Update on DESA reform to adapt to supporting the SDGs in response to GA resolution 70/299, through which Member States requested the Secretary-General to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and internal coordination of DESA to support the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>13</sup> CDO Strategy 10 Mar 2017.

- ECA delivered numerous SDG-specific and SDG-driven activities; for example, in order to enhance the principle of “leaving no one behind”, it undertook strategic reviews to reorient the Commission’s work to simultaneously support implementation of, and follow-up to, the 2030 Agenda and regional agendas such as Agenda 2063;
- ECE reframed its overall strategy to address the SDGs, focusing on 9 SDGs where ECE has a comparative advantage and can provide the most value added;
- ECLAC aligned much of its work to be SDG-focused and delivered several notable outputs;
- ESCAP oriented its strategy, subprogrammes, activities and results frameworks to align with the 2030 Agenda, and new SDG-related activities were initiated; and
- ESCWA adopted the 2030 Agenda strategy in December 2015, making a number of changes including the alignment of its results framework to promote a strengthened regional level link between national efforts and global platforms in support of Member States.

Furthermore, interviews with the Regional Commission Executive Secretaries highlighted their common approach in re-purposing conference structures to bring together Member States and/or UN entities specifically around the SDGs, as well as reallocating resources away from smaller and disparate projects and to more inter-sectoral projects. Interviewees also highlighted specific SDG initiatives which they had undertaken, shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Examples of Regional Commission SDG initiatives**

<b>Regional commission</b>	<b>Initiative to realign work to support SDGs</b>
ECA	Creation, and resourcing, of a private sector division focusing on poverty reduction to stimulate effective financing of the corresponding SDGs
ECE	Prioritization of four main regional challenges—sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable mobility and smart connectivity, sustainable and smart cities, and statistical work—to incentivize collaboration and break traditional internal siloes
ECLAC	Creation of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Creation of an SDG Helpdesk and Rapid Response Facility which supports strengthened government capacity to conduct follow up and review of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs
ESCWA	Establishment of a Unit on the 2030 Agenda in response to Member States’ decision to adopt an ESCWA-wide 2030 Strategy, including programmatic, operational and organizational alignments

*However, their coordination roles have not been sufficiently defined*

23. Based on document review and interviews, DESA and the Regional Commissions are each expected to play an additional, wider coordination role in support of the SDGs, including the promotion of effective inter-linkages across multiple entities and across the global, regional and country levels. There are a few examples of how they have attempted to do this, including DESA’s multifaceted support to the Economic and Social Council’s (ECOSOC) High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and establishment of the UN System SDGs Action Online Database (discussed further in para 44). Further examples include the work undertaken by the Regional Commissions to operationalize their comparative advantage – the ability to use regional expertise to translate the global SDG

agenda into region and country-specific activities, as exemplified by the ESCAP sub-regional approach to the collection of SDG data. However, the coordination roles that DESA and the Regional Commissions are expected to fulfil are not spelled out clearly in existing documentation and interview data indicated a lack of consensus on what these roles should look like.

24. Furthermore, at the completion of this evaluation, there was no single document that defined the wider coordination roles of DESA and the Regional Commissions and that provided guidance on how effective coordination between UN entities in support to the SDGs was to be achieved. The lack of such a plan made it challenging for DESA to play its role effectively in anticipating coordination needs, addressing those needs and monitoring linkages between UN entities in their common SDG-related work.

*DESA and Regional Commissions staff have identified various challenges in adapting their work to meet the needs of the 2030 Development Agenda*

25. Interviews with DESA managers highlighted several challenges faced by the Department. Several stated that the biggest challenge DESA faces is how to manage its additional SDG work with insufficient resources. DESA requested additional resources after ratification of the 2030 Agenda to support the design and implementation of the SDG framework and to develop and maintain the SDG global reporting tools and products. However, DESA did not receive what was requested. As a result, managers noted that several divisions have a larger workload but fewer staff to undertake critical activities, such as supporting the HLPF, generating follow-up reports on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to support Member States and organizing the UN World Data Forum, including supporting associated data improvement initiatives.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, DESA managers expressed concerns regarding low staff morale in this work environment.

26. DESA managers also identified a challenge regarding how to best support Member States in understanding and planning for the SDGs. Part of this DESA support has necessitated balancing country needs against the global agenda, and to do this, DESA has been tasked with designing target level indicators for goals in consultation with both countries and other UN entities; aligning these two sources of data has, at times, been difficult. One manager referred to this difficulty when asking “What are [DESA] obligations to consult with countries when we publish country data ... in its altered form within the harmonized global data set?” DESA is also tasked with building capacity in Member States so they can gather data and monitor progress towards the SDGs. This has resulted in the need to review all capacity development projects to ensure they align to support SDG target achievement, even though some projects started before adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

27. Interviews with the Executive Secretaries of the five Regional Commissions identified challenges they too have been facing in adapting their work to the SDGs. The first is inadequate resourcing: all five raised concerns about how they would accomplish the new work agenda with current funding. The second issue raised was differing priorities, expectations and capacity levels among Member States within each region. For example, ECE has both developed and middle-income countries in its membership, and ESCAP includes China and Russia, as well as five Least Developed Countries that are poised to graduate in the next five years, all of which will need their own distinct type of SDG-related support. A third challenge noted was aligning conference structures to the 2030 Agenda at a time of system-wide reform.

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<sup>14</sup> As Secretariat to the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), the Statistics Division of DESA organizes the Forum. <https://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/about/>

**Result C: In the absence of an overarching system-wide plan, entities were still striving for coherence and efficiency**

*No overarching SDG strategic plan or results framework is yet in place to guide the work of the system as a whole to support Member States*

28. In their resolution A/72/279, Member States requested heads of entities, under leadership of the Secretary-General, to “submit ... a system-wide strategic document ... and to ensure that it is specific, concrete and targeted in addressing gaps and overlaps.”<sup>15</sup> This request was made in the context of “repositioning efforts of the UN development system at the global, regional and country levels”. Interviews with the development system reform transition team and the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), which supports the recently established United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), confirmed that work was underway on the development of the document called for by Member States but had not yet been completed at the time of the evaluation.<sup>16</sup> This document is expected to bolster organizational policy coherence in undertaking an integrated, holistic and comprehensive system-wide approach to supporting Member States.

29. Within the context of these reform initiatives, OIOS reviewed documentation and interview data to assess policy coherence --the degree to which entities were integrating their SDG activities with those of other entities in a manner that was:

- avoiding duplication;
- targeting gaps;
- harnessing comparative advantages; and
- creating synergies.

A review of available relevant documentation provided little evidence that entities were integrating their SDG activities in this manner. Preparedness at the system-wide level to maximize the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of collective UN entity contributions to support implementation of the SDGs was lacking at the time of this evaluation.

30. The lack of a comprehensive results framework indicated a further critical gap in cohesive and efficient system-wide SDG support, as noted as well by one of the Regional Commission Executive Secretaries interviewed. Without a global mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG achievement, it has not been possible to monitor and report on the extent to which entities plan and work together or to assess and report on the results of entities’ cumulative efforts to support Member States.

*While various efforts are underway to revise and/or develop mechanisms and approaches to facilitate more coherent UN system-wide support, gaps exist*

31. **Global level:** Coordination at the global level is uneven. A few mechanisms and approaches have been utilized to coordinate efficient SDG support at the global level. For example, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on the SDGs (IAEG-SDGs), with its Secretariat in DESA, has successfully promoted coordination in a number of ways, including through its work to harmonize global-level SDG indicators, which enabled the issuance of all mandated SDG reports.

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<sup>15</sup> A/RES/72/279, paras 1 and 30.

<sup>16</sup> The DSG in her letter to Member States on 27 March 2019, shared an annotated outline of the system-wide strategic document (SWSD) requesting comments to be sent to the UNDS Transition Team (TT). The UNSDG Strategic Results Group on SDG Implementation (SRG1), which is co-Chaired by the USG DESA and the USG UNDP, were planning to convene a meeting of the group to provide feedback and guidance to the UNDS TT on the SWSD development.

32. However, global coordination around statistical capacity development has been lacking, specifically with regard to supporting utilisation of country-generated statistics for global reporting. While the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data<sup>17</sup> identified a significant need in this area, no sufficiently resourced UN framework was in place to support Member States' statistical capacity development needs. One UN staff member summarized a common view in stating "[national] statisticians will not be able to cooperate to draw up a list of 232 indicators if the UN system cannot help them build the capacity to implement it."

33. Historically, UN system-wide coherence has also been facilitated by the three thematic global coordinating mechanisms of UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans. Multiple staff interviewed pointed to significant work on the part of UN-Water to support SDG-6, including the coordination of the UN data collection and management for SDG 6 through the Integrated Monitoring Initiative. However, staff interviewed perceived UN-Oceans as having insufficient resources to support Member States on SDG-14. Staff interviewed also noted role confusion around the existence of both UN-Energy and a similar entity --UN-Energy for All.<sup>18</sup>

34. **Regional level:** Regional level coordination mechanisms have not been sufficiently effective. The Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs) have a mandate to coordinate policy across Secretariat and non-Secretariat entities at the regional level. A review of documents indicated that the Regional Commissions, which serve as RCM Secretariats, referred to the RCMs in very general terms, without pointing to any substantive results, especially with respect to the 2030 Agenda, and no RCM results frameworks were identified. Further, based on interviews and document review, it was unclear how RCM decisions actually affected United Nations Country Team (UNCT) activities or translated into integrated UN system policy coherence or action. All five Regional Commission Executive Secretaries interviewed also shared the common perspective that RCMs had not fulfilled the full extent of their envisioned coordination roles in strengthening policy and programme coherence of the UN and affiliated organizations at the regional level.<sup>19</sup>

35. **Country level:** Coordination at the country level appeared to be somewhat more evolved. While, the 2017 QCPR survey indicated that entities reported engaging in cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms based in the field, such as joint missions and assessments, it also revealed that much more needs to be done to improve collaboration across sectors among entities, especially in countries with large cross-sectoral programmes. An example of well-coordinated strategic planning which included a country level focus was the drafting of a common chapter, spearheaded by UN Women, in the strategic plans of UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, which provided relatively comprehensive information on intended common strategic approaches, outlining tangible joint actions to be taken in support of the 2030 agenda, shared indicators, and the collaborative advantage of each entity.<sup>20</sup>

36. Furthermore, the current reform of the UNDAF into a more holistic document that captures more UN entity activities, particularly those of Secretariat and non-resident agencies, was identified by interviewees as a good opportunity for strengthening the coherence of UN system-wide SDG support at the country level. The UNDAF could identify and resolve any such potential duplication for a more coherent UN system approach.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/Cape-Town-Global-Action-Plan/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.un-energy.org/> and <https://www.seforall.org/>

<sup>19</sup> The RCM in the Arab States region was assessed as more proactive; 2030 work was consolidated under one umbrella Working Group co-chaired by ESCWA and the R-UNDG and four distinct taskforces were established to promote coordination on specific outputs/activities.

<sup>20</sup> Entities whose budgeting/strategic planning processes are subject to the CPC and Fifth Committee are more constrained than some other UN entities with regard to altering strategic plans.

37. Additionally, DCO had commissioned the support of the Community Systems Foundation to develop a tracking system – called UN INFO - to capture “how the UN system at the country level supports governments to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.”<sup>21</sup> Staff interviewed in UNDP noted that the goal for UN INFO was to provide a systematic approach for determining the appropriate mix of capacities and expertise to meet the needs and objectives of governments.<sup>22</sup>

38. Despite these promising initiatives, however, documentation review and interviews indicated that joint global- regional- and country- strategic planning, as well as related assessments and joint missions were primarily undertaken on an ad hoc basis, without any overarching strategic plan or implementation framework in place.

**Result D: While some effective partnerships have been created to support the SDGs, the lack of a comprehensive framework to guide how these partnerships operate has created risks of ineffectiveness and inefficiency**

*Individual entities have established good partnership practices to support the SDGs*

39. The UN system has identified partnerships as key for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.<sup>23</sup> In Resolution 70/1 endorsing the agenda, partnerships were listed as one of the five pillars crucial to sustainable development. More specifically, SDG 17 called on multi-stakeholder partnerships as necessary for successful implementation of the SDGs. Additionally, in the 2017 QCPR survey, entities acknowledged the need for a holistic and sustained commitment from all partners in strengthening Member State capacities to achieve the SDGs, while acknowledging the challenges involved in doing so – most notably differing funding cycles.

40. Despite the lack of a system-wide framework to guide their efforts, UN entities have successfully engaged in partnerships to support the SDGs within and outside of the system. Most evaluands surveyed (19 of 25) have established partnerships, totalling 2073 overall. More than half of these partnerships (52 per cent) were with external organizations.<sup>24</sup>

41. Early feedback from partners of the entities in the scope of this evaluation has been generally positive. Most partners surveyed (78 per cent) rated their partnerships as somewhat or very effective. They also reported that SDG-related partnerships have demonstrated early successes, most commonly including:

- Increased outreach to stakeholders, leading to greater awareness of the SDGs and stakeholder engagement;
- Enhanced communication, collaboration, cooperation, and trust;
- Increased knowledge sharing (via the UN’s convening power), often leading to peer-to-peer learning;
- Reduced duplication of effort and silos through leveraging complementary strengths and expertise;
- The development of common SDG-related policy positions; and

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.communitysystemsfoundation.org/impact/un-info-promoting-transparency-collaboration-and-accountability-in-country-programming>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.communitysystemsfoundation.org/impact/un-info-promoting-transparency-collaboration-and-accountability-in-country-programming>.

<sup>23</sup> UN definition of a partnership: Voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task. Partnerships for the SDGs: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/about#faq>, accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> The denominator is 25 (instead of 30) entities because DM, DSS, DGACM, UNON, and UNOV were excluded from the survey collecting partnership data.



- Integration of the 2030 Agenda into global/regional frameworks and/or national strategies.

*However, these partnerships have been created in the absence of a system-wide partnership framework*

42. The 2030 Agenda commitment to partnerships has not yet translated into a comprehensive, detailed framework for the UN system.<sup>25</sup> There has been no system-wide guidance for UN entities, Member States, or other stakeholders on how to partner effectively to support implementation of the SDGs through an integrated and holistic approach. Nor does any system-wide process to vet potential partners against a set of established criteria exist, thus creating reputational risks. The Secretary-General recently established an initiative, within the context of the UNSDG Strategic Partnerships Results Group, to explore options for developing a platform to exchange information among UN entities about potential external partners.

43. To address the current gap, some entities have independently developed and implemented their own individual partnership frameworks, which have been available for other system entities to use. For example, DSDG collaborated with The Partnering Initiative<sup>26</sup> to produce a guidebook that contextualized partnerships within the SDG framework. It also provided tools so that entities could forge partnerships that are of value to all stakeholders while advancing the 2030 Agenda. Other entities, such as UN Women, ILO, and UNICEF, have attempted to create a basic set of parameters against which system entities can evaluate potential external partners. Additionally, the DESA/Division for Inclusive Social Development (DESA/DISD) identified SDG-related thematic areas and sought to lead partnerships with governments and UN agencies and programmes to build national capacity in social protection, youth in peace-building and cooperatives for SDGs.

44. As the substantive hub of DESA support to Member States in the implementation of SDGs, DESA/Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DESA/DSDG) has taken the lead on collecting data related to SDG partnerships which has facilitated knowledge exchange and increased stakeholder engagement. DSDG's [Partnerships for the SDGs Online Platform](#) is the UN's global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships made in support of sustainable development and the 17 SDGs; it is searchable by SDG and partnership status and provides details on a partnership's timeline and expected outputs. DESA also maintains the [UN System SDGs Action Online Database](#), which provides information on how the UN system is supporting implementation of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, including data on internal and external partnerships. DESA also maintains partnership databases for specific SDGs or thematic areas. For example, the Ocean Registry of Voluntary Commitments for SDG 14 was developed in support of the UN Ocean Conference; the registry includes commitments from all stakeholders in their support of SDG 14, including supporting their active follow up and implementation. The [Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\) Action Platform](#) was developed in support of the 2014 SIDS Conference and beyond to monitor existing and launch new partnerships for SIDS.<sup>27</sup> Further, DESA supports other

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<sup>25</sup> The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), in its report "The United Nations System – Private Sector Partnerships Arrangements in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (JIU/REP/2017/8), pronounced the need for a "holistic, integrative and universal approach of the 2030 Agenda" (page iii). In this regard, the JIU recommended a consistent and coordinated approach for private sector engagement, including a system-wide database on opportunities for private sector partnerships as well as the profiles and performance of private sector partners.

<sup>26</sup> The Partnering Initiative is an independent non-profit dedicated to unleashing the power of partnership for a prosperous and sustainable future. For more information, visit <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/about-us/>.

<sup>27</sup> As of April 2019, a [SIDS Partnership Analysis](#) is available on the platform, to support Member States in preparing for the SAMOA Pathway High-level Review that will take place on 27 September 2019 at United Nations (UN) headquarters, New York.

UN entities in setting up their own partnership registries in support of the SDGs; these are referred to as [Action Networks for the SDGs](#).

45. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) and the UN Global Compact, DESA/DSDG launched the [Partnership Data for the SDGs](#) (PD4SDGs) initiative. DESA/DSDG utilizes the PD4SDGs to regularly publish reports on the number and nature of SDG-related partnerships. This initiative seeks to bring greater transparency, coherence, impact and comparability of work carried out by multi-stakeholder partnerships and promotes use of partnership commitments that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, with clear and Time-based deliverables (SMART). Further, DESA/DSDG, UNOP, and UNGC hosted an Annual Partnership Exchange in 2018, alongside the HLPF, to review partnerships supporting the implementation of the SDGs; the event summary document began to examine internal systems and processes to make the UN more accessible to partners. These three entities also established the UN-Business Partnerships agreement, which outlines the distinct yet complementary functions and contributions of each entity in establishing UN-Business partnerships.

46. While the initiatives described above have served a useful purpose, they have not substituted for a system-wide framework. Such a framework is needed to ensure an overall strategic roadmap to harness the respective entity strengths and comparative advantages and guide the collective efforts of the entire UN system in supporting Member States achievement of the SDGs.

*The lack of a larger partnership framework has resulted in inefficiencies*

47. **Poorly defined roles and responsibilities.** One of the consequences of not having a system-wide framework has been that individual entities do not have clearly defined partnership roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in an unclear designation of lead entities when multiple partners are working on joint projects. Furthermore, as there is no system-wide definition on effective partnerships and partner roles, it is difficult to evaluate how well partnerships are doing or provide evidence to stakeholders of the potential value added of partnerships.

48. **Duplicative partnership databases.** The lack of a larger system-wide roadmap has also resulted in multiple SDG-related partnership databases, resulting in a risk of redundant data. For example, while both the UN System SDGs Action Online Database and Partnerships Platform discussed above in para 44 have served a useful purpose in maintaining partnership-related information, partnerships may be listed multiple times in both databases. This risk of duplication may increase with the recently administered DESA voluntary survey on partnerships. Furthermore, since participation in these surveys and platforms was voluntary, none of the resulting databases were comprehensive: the data do not capture the full range of internal and external partnership activities. It was also unclear if and how the data were cross-validated against each other and if and how any discrepancies were resolved. This has put the UN system at risk for inefficiencies, such as duplicative efforts and missed opportunities to understand existing partnerships and inform new ones.

49. **Potential duplication across UNOP and individual entities.** While it is not mandatory for system entities to consult UNOP before forging a partnership, there is an advantage to doing so, given UNOP's partnership capacity. UNOP is meant to act as a gateway for partnerships between external organizations and the UN system.<sup>28</sup> Yet there is limited evidence of collaboration between system entities and UNOP: of the 2073 partnerships reported in the evaluand survey, less than one

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<sup>28</sup> UNOP has 4 core areas of work, including "the Office advises, guides and facilitates partnership events and initiatives between the United Nations and non-state actors (such as private sector, foundation and civil society) in support of the Sustainable Development Goals." SG's bulletin on the Organization of UNOP: <https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2009/14>.

per cent denoted UNOP as a partner. Thus, nearly all these partnerships were independent of the primary UN body responsible for coordinating external partnerships with the UN system.

**Result E: While still early, some UN entities have reported effective support to Member States in achieving the SDGs**

*Early good practices exemplify the types of effective support that UN entities have been well placed to provide to Member States*

50. Based on results of the evaluand survey, UN entities reported early positive results in five key areas of support in which they were well placed to effectively contribute to Member State efforts in achieving the SDGs. These five areas are:

51. **Support to the SDG Global Indicator Framework.** Several entities have focused on the methodological development and tiered graduation of a subset of indicators for a particular SDG, such as UNCTAD work with SDG 8. Also, the Statistics Division of DESA has played a crucial role in organizing the World Data Forum that served to create multi-stakeholder participation in operationalizing the global framework.

52. **Support to mainstreaming thematic issues such as gender, human rights, and principles such as “leave no one behind”, including synthesis of data within relevant thematic areas.** Several entities reported having played a key role in mainstreaming relevant thematic issues into Member State implementation of the SDGs. OHCHR work to assist Member States with integrating human rights into its national policies was one example of this type of support. Additionally, UN entity flagship reports, such as UN Women’s SDG Monitoring report on gender equality and the ITC Standard MAP database covering 240 sustainability initiatives across more than 80 sectors and 180 countries, provided good examples of synthesizing data within a particular theme.

53. **Development of guidelines or frameworks.** The development of SDG-related guidelines and/or frameworks has been key to the support needed by Member States to which several entities reported having effectively responded. Examples of this type of support included ECE Roadmap for Statistics on SDGs, which established clear strategic guidance for National Statistics Offices and other statistics actors, and UN Habitat Guide to Assist National and Local Governments to Monitor and Report on SDG11, a practical monitoring framework for SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Another example are the guidelines for the Voluntary National Review which assisted countries in preparing their review processes and presentations at the HLPF.

54. **Capacity building of national institutions.** Some entities reported successful efforts to build capacity of national institutions in line with the 2030 Agenda. Initiatives in this area included the SDGs Helpdesk of ESCAP, a user-focused portal that provides SDG info and corresponding ESCAP support services, and the support provided by OHRLLS to its Member States in the context of national inter-governmental processes related to SDGs.

55. **Management of key stakeholder forums and conferences.** Entities also noted that their convening of stakeholder forums and conferences was an important component of the support they provided to implementing the SDGs. Examples, among others, of this support included the Regional Commissions’ Regional Forums to assist in the preparation of the VNR process for the HLPF and their key role as platforms for follow-up and review at the regional level.

*When drilled down to the country level, UN entity initiatives to support Member States with the SDGs have yielded early positive results in three case studies*

56. Three case study countries – Mexico, Uganda, and Bhutan – illustrate examples of how the UN system has contributed to positive results in implementing the SDGs. Each one will be discussed below.

57. **Case Study 1: Mexico.** Mexico’s active engagement with the 2030 Agenda began during conceptualization, with Mexico being among the most active participants in work undertaken to define the Agenda. It has since seen notable milestones of progress that were supported by UN entities. First was the launch of a powerful interactive portal to provide citizens with easy access to local level information on SDG achievement. According to the SDG Knowledge Hub website<sup>29</sup>, an online resource center set up by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Mexico’s Information System of Sustainable Development Goals (SIODS) is a powerful online portal developed in collaboration with Esri (a private-sector company specializing in data and spatial analytics) that provides access to data around 16 of the 17 SDGs, including 66 indicators.<sup>30</sup> SIODS was released on the occasion of Mexico’s VNR during the July 2018 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and it “allows users to view SDG data for each province in Mexico”, and “identify areas that are making progress towards the 2030 Agenda, and areas where further efforts are required”.<sup>31</sup>

58. Another early success in Mexico was the launch of the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS) in September of 2018. Coordinated by UN Women and the National Institute of Statistics (INEGI) in Mexico City, it will be “a cutting-edge institution enabled by the United Nations’ international experience, UN Women’s global knowledge on gender statistics, and INEGI’s leading role in the generation of statistics in Latin America”<sup>32</sup> and demonstrates the importance of investments that not only seek to increase data, but also to diversify and deepen data accuracy.

59. **Case Study 2: Uganda.** Uganda is noted as one of the first in the world to mainstream the SDGs into its national planning framework. Its early involvement in both the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, buy-in from the incoming national governance, and voluntary participation in the first High-level Political Forum in 2016 have contributed to its ability to take advantage of UN support. Key to this early mutual collaboration between UN and national government efforts has been the way in which it utilized the VNR as a mechanism for assessing its readiness for the SDGs.<sup>33</sup>

60. Another early result in Uganda was the close collaboration of the UNCT and Government in SDG planning. Through the concerted effort of the Government and the UNCT, Uganda is one of the first countries to be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Its UNDAF responds to a total of 133 out of 151 applicable targets, leading to an average SDG integration rate of 85.8%.<sup>34</sup> The UNDAF also explicitly identified where UN support was needed. Further, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Modelling tools were applied to “answer key policy questions, enhance capacities to run and interpret modelling scenarios, and strengthen skills to communicate key results”.<sup>35</sup>

61. **Case Study 3: Bhutan.** Bhutan also presents a good example of where the UN has supported a nationally owned approach to embracing, prioritizing, and implementing the SDGs. Classified as one of the world’s 48 Least Developed Countries (LDC), Bhutan has made significant socio-economic

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<sup>29</sup> <https://sdg.iisd.org/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/mexicos-sdg-portal-brings-functionality-to-reporting/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/mexicos-sdg-portal-brings-functionality-to-reporting/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://lac.unwomen.org/en/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2018/9/centro-global-de-excelencia-en-estadistica-de-genero-mexico>

<sup>33</sup> [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10689Uganda%20Review%20Report\\_CDs1.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10689Uganda%20Review%20Report_CDs1.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.ug.undp.org/content/dam/uganda/docs/Uganda%20UNDAF%202016-2020.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <https://un-modelling.github.io/country-projectsuganda/>

progress, making it one of four countries that are eligible for graduation within its next strategic term. Having met the eligibility criteria for the past two terms, Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan period (2019-2023) will be the transition plan to non-LDC status. One early success for the UN in this regard has been the LDC support from DESA/Economic Analysis and Policy Division (DESA/EAPD) in building productive capacity, through policy and analysis support in preparing for the transition. The UN development account projects emphasized planning and preparation for this transition and learning how to more effectively engage with the private sector and CSO communities as international funding is likely to shift as a result. Additionally, close engagement by ESCAP within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Framework for Bhutan resulted in an increase in policy coherence with regional priorities which is now embedded under Outcome 1.

62. A further early result has been UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative, which focuses on integrating environment, climate and poverty into Bhutan's policies, plans, programmes and budgets to achieve a greener, more inclusive and more sustainable development path.<sup>36</sup> Given Bhutan's commitment and reliance on the environment for its continuing development, it is no surprise that 2 of the 3 priority SDGs identified by the national government reflect this.

## V. Conclusion

63. In an environment of on-going and significant organizational reform, UN entities have had to adapt their work to ensure efficient and effective support to Member States in their attainment of the SDGs. In doing this, entities have taken many important steps to make necessary changes to their strategies and programmes of work to ensure they meet the priorities and needs of national governments. However, more remains to be done, and the UN will not succeed in "delivering as one", nor retain its institutional relevance, if the activities of its individual entities are not undertaken in a more unified and holistic manner.

64. A more fully integrated system-wide approach – one which cultivates complementarities, promotes synergies and harvests respective strengths – is critical if the Organization is to act cohesively in delivering the support Member States need to honour their 2030 Agenda commitments. For this to happen, several things are needed:

- a system-wide framework to strategize a common and coordinated approach;
- an action plan that identifies the specific contributions of different entities and anticipates and mitigates against potential duplication and overlap; and
- stronger and more efficient planning for and management of SDG-related partnerships.

65. In addition, wider institutional barriers need to be further addressed – including competing funding streams, uncoordinated work streams, weak knowledge management, and disjointed monitoring and reporting. Furthermore, in order to achieve a more unified approach, in line with work already underway to develop a system-wide strategic document,<sup>37</sup> the roles and responsibilities of key SDG actors in the UN system – such as DESA and the Regional Commissions, as well as the newly formed UN DCO – must be more clearly defined. This should include further information on how these entities will work to ensure that the SDG activities they each undertake are integrated with those of other UN entities performing similar support activities in a manner that: avoids duplication; closes gaps; harnesses comparative advantages; and, creates synergies. Related to this, in the context of operationalizing the six DESA reform measures referenced in para 21, there is a need for further clarification of the coordination role of DESA as it relates to that of other UN entities at the global, regional and country levels.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.unpei.org/sites/default/files/dmdocuments/Bhutan%20Brochure.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> See paras 28 - 30 of this report.

66. In the context of UN reform, some promising work is already underway to strengthen system-wide coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. In addition to the initiatives discussed in Result C, such as ongoing enhancements to the UNDAF, these also include: reinvigoration of the RC system, including putting in place a new generation of UN country teams; reviews of the regional level and the multi-country offices (MCOs); and revisions to the management accountability framework to better define respective roles and accountability agreements across the global- regional- and country- levels. Also, the Funding Compact, which was in draft at the time of this evaluation, but has now been finalized, seeks to provide a framework that will incentivize joint SDG support to Member States, thus decreasing fragmentation and transaction costs. Furthermore, the Mainstreaming, Acceleration, Policy Support (MAPS) project, formerly led by UNDP and now under the responsibility of the Resident Coordinator system, provides a common platform and roadmap for support to SDG implementation and a strong opportunity to enhance collaboration within the UN system, as well as more efficient and effective channelling of SDG-marked resources.

67. In moving forward, the Organization must identify and address risks to achieving true system-wide coherence. In this regard, the following two questions must be considered:

- How will the system-wide strategic document, called for in the context of repositioning the UN development system, encompass the work of entities not considered to be within the development pillar?
- In addition, how will coordination overall between entities within the UNSDG and those not within the UNSDG, such as the Department of Peace Operations and peacekeeping missions, be ensured going forward?

68. The 2030 Development Agenda enshrines the ideals of equal opportunity and development for all members of the global community. The commitment made by Member States to achieve those ideals must be matched by the commitment of the UN system as one to support Member States in achieving them. Building upon the many positive steps already taken, the UN will need to continue to integrate the respective value add and capacities of all three of its pillars into its work.

## VI. Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1: (Result C paras. 28 - 38)**

69. **The EOSG/UNDSG** should consider ways to include the mandate and activities of entities from the Peace and Security pillar, and the Management and Support entities not already included in UNSDG, in its work, including in the context of the system-wide strategic document (SWSD) currently being drafted.

*Indicator of achievement: Relevant documentation demonstrating that the EOSG/UNDSG gave consideration to the inclusion of the mandate and activities of these entities in work related to the SWSD. Examples could include: meeting notes, follow-up notes, draft documents and/or final output documents.*

### **Recommendation 2: (Result D, paras. 39 - 49)**

70. **Taking into account the current initiative underway, the EOSG/UNDSG** should continue to take the lead in developing a system-wide partnership framework.

*Indicator of achievement: Development of a system-wide partnership framework, which may not yet be fully implemented but should be at the planning stages.*

## Annex I: Management responses on the draft report

In this Annex, OIOS presents the full text of comments received from evaluands on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

### EOSG management response:



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. Yee Woo Guo, Director  
A: Inspection Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 31 May 2019

THROUGH: Olga de la Piedra, Director  
S/C DE: Office of the Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

FROM: Mario Baez, Chief, Accountability Service  
DE: Business Transformation and Accountability Division  
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

SUBJECT: **Final Draft of OIOS Report on Evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals**  
OBJET:

1. Please find attached Annex I with the comments provided by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in regards to the above-mentioned final draft evaluation report.
2. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the evaluation results.

cc: Ms. Viotti  
Ms. Arapakos

**Recommendation Action Plan****Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on Evaluation United Nations entities' preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals**

IED-19-001

14 May 2019

IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>The EOSG/UNSDG should consider ways to include the mandate and activities of entities from the Peace and Security pillar, and the Management and Support entities not already included in UNSDG, in its work, including in the context of the system-wide strategic document (SWSD) currently being drafted.</p> <p><i>Indicator of achievement: Relevant documentation demonstrating that the EOSG/UNSDG gave consideration to the inclusion of the mandate and activities of these entities in work related to the SWSD. Examples could include: meeting notes, follow-up notes, draft documents</i></p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Secretary-General has established since 2017 the Joint Steering Committee on Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC), comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the UNSDG, OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, FAO, DPPA, DPO, PBSO, OHCHR, and the World Bank, as part of his reforms of the UN system. The JSC was created to promote greater coherence of humanitarian and development action in reducing needs, risks and vulnerability, in particular in protracted crises and transitions to longer-term sustainable development. In doing so, the JSC aims to integrate the important perspectives and contributions of peace and peace-building actors to ensure a comprehensive approach to crises. Such cross-pillar work is a critical element to achieve the SDGs.</p> <p>The executive decision-making bodies established by the Secretary-General also includes cross-pillar leadership to ensure mandates and perspectives across pillars inform strategic decisions and guidance to the UN system.</p>	<p>Joint Steering Committee on Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC)</p> <p>Executive Committee</p>	<p><b>Closure requested</b></p>

IED-19-001

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\*OIOS Notes: (1) Comments referenced in EOSG management response memorandum are embedded in Recommendation Action Plan. (2) "Closure requested" for IED recommendation 1 noted by OIOS; OIOS will follow up with EOSG accordingly.



IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
<i>and/or final output documents.</i>	Inter-agency task forces are also convened as needed.		
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p><b>Taking into account the current initiative underway, the EOSG/UNDSG should continue to take the lead in developing a system-wide partnership framework, for the 2030 Agenda</b></p> <p><i>Indicator of achievement: Development of a system-wide partnership framework, which may not yet be fully implemented but should be at the planning stages.</i></p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>In his December 2017 report, the Secretary-General highlighted to Member States the need to address the fragmentation in the UN system's approach and to scale up our partnerships for the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General has since initiated a series of partnerships-related workstreams, including strengthening the governance and performance of critical components of the UN development system partnership architecture and a process to define clear roles and responsibilities for the entities in the UN's partnership ecosystem (UNSDG, the UN Office for Partnership (UNOP), DESA and the UN Global Compact). An internal review process has been conducted to address these questions. The UNSDG Strategic Partnerships Results Group also has developed common approach to due diligence for private sector partnerships to guide resident coordinators and country teams on how to engage in joint partnerships with the private sector. The UNSDG is also preparing a common legal template for multi-agency partnerships with the private sector. Additionally, as part of the Secretary-General's commitment to greater transparency around partnerships, an online platform that registers and reports on some 4,000 voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the SDGs has been developed by DESA. These are all essential planks in efforts to de-risk, inform and maximize the potential benefits of these relationships.</p>	UNSDG, UNOP, DESA, UN Global Compact Office.	January 2020

## DESA management response:

### OIOS Evaluation Report; *“Evaluation of United Nations entities’ preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to SDGs”*

#### - General

1. It may be good to update the report before its release to ensure it is not immediately out of date with respect to recent information from the 2019 Secretary-General’s report on the QCPR and the results of the Operational Activities Segment.
  2. The report analysis considers only the membership of the Secretariat and related entities (defined by budget and strategic framework). It does not capture the full membership of the UNDS. It may be necessary to consider the analysis once again in terms of how the entities under review also interact with UNDS entities not part of this analysis to fully encompass the scope of the review.
- Add to footnote 6 the specific reference that the group of 30 entities covered is not the same as the entities that make up the UNSDG, nor those considered as part of the UNDS for the purposes of the QCPR report/funding report. (especially since this is referenced)
  - The data analysis includes information from the 2017 DESA Survey of HQ entities. 2018 data is available and reported. If this cannot be added, a footnote could reflect this in the section around para 9 and the analysis reflected appropriately.
  - The source of the figures is unlisted. DESA would like to confirm if this is from the OIOS data or uses some DESA survey data.
  - On the system-wide strategic document needs to be updated to reflect the full distribution of a version of the document to Member States during the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment. OIOS may also wish to consider closely further information from the UNDS transition team on any updated new information.
  - **Paragraphs 23 and 24** refer to DESA’s support to the HLPF and coordination role. It would be important to point out that with the GA resolution on ECOSOC strengthening, the ECOSOC Integration Segment, serviced by UN-DESA, has a redefined mandate to leverage the work of the Council’s subsidiary bodies and the work of the UN system to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Segment is envisioned to coordinate and guide the work of its subsidiary bodies and bring the UN system’s analysis and proposals to contribute to the thematic review of the HLPF.
  - DESA reiterates that in **figure B (page9)**: DESA and a few other entities are given only a coordination role, which is inaccurate as DESA does a lot of substantive work and should be also in “Thematic lead”. As a general comment, it is not quite clear what “thematic lead” means. Additionally, there is not enough recognition about the importance of interlinkages of SDGs which should result in a much more coordinated work among UN entities in support of the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Figure B: Entity primary SDG support roles<sup>9</sup>

Coordination role	Thematic lead	Direct service provision	Support function
DESA ECA ECE ECLAC ESCAP ESCWA OHRLLS OSAA	DPA ITC OHCHR OOSA UN Habitat UN Women UNCTAD UNEP UNODA UNODC	DPKO OCHA UNHCR UNRWA	DGACM DM DPI DSS OLA UNOG UNON UNOV

- Regarding **support to the preparations of the VNRs at the HLPF**, DESA has organized global and regional forums to help countries prepare their VNR and its presentation at the HLPF. Participants have found the events very useful in understanding and taking ownership of their VNR. Dedicated sessions are organized with countries having conducted a VNR already. "Speed dating" sessions are organized with organization able to support the VNRs.
- **Table 2: Examples of DESA SDG-focused changes** – please update text of third and fourth boxes (added text in blue below):

[Support VNR preparations through global and regional workshops and P](#) produced annual Voluntary National Review Synthesis Reports summarizing key lessons learned and recommendations shared by countries on various aspects in the implementation of SDGs, as well as a handbook on good practices for VNR preparations.

Changed organizational structure to provide better, more coordinated intergovernmental support and analysis to the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC and the General Assembly; focused DSDG work on SDG thematic level policy analysis [and support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism \(TFM\)](#).

- **Paragraph 30** – comment:  
We suggest looking into the role of the QCPR report, and the new reporting in 2021 system wide joint results.
- **Paragraphs 31 to 33** – comment:  
Should reflect the limited nature of the analytical coverage as this does not include the Specialized agencies which are global leads on several SDG indicators and sources.
- **Paragraph 34** – comment:  
Should be updated to reflect the recommendations for the new regional collaboration platform in A/74/73/E/2019/14.
- **Paragraph 44** (added text in blue):

DESA/DSDG's Partnerships for the SDGs Online Platform [is a global registry](#) of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships made in support of sustainable development and the SDGs, [primarily by Member States and other stakeholders in connection with major UN Conferences and Summits related to sustainable development; the information has been provided on a voluntary basis](#); it is searchable by SDG and partnership status and provides details on a partnership's timeline and expected outputs.

- **Paragraph 48** - Duplicative partnership databases: There are some inaccuracies in this paragraph. Firstly, the Partnerships for SDGs online platform has been set up as a central “umbrella” platform that includes several sub-registries, including for the Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments and the SIDS Partnerships, for example. While it is not possible to avoid duplication 100%, in fact having an “umbrella” platform with a one-partnership-database approach has in our experience resulted in very few duplications of registrations, in a database with over 4,000 registered initiatives.
- **Paragraphs 44 and 48** incorrectly refer to the “SDG Action Database”. The correct name of this database is “[UN System SDGs action online database](#)” and it contains the results from two surveys circulated to the member entities of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, as well as UN Conventions secretariats and research institutions (ECESA Plus), on the measures they have taken to implement the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- We further propose to amend **paragraph 55** (p.19) by adding a reference (in blue below) to the annual STI Forum as one of the examples of key stakeholder forums of conferences, as well as references to a list of key stakeholder forums and conferences that are organized in connection with the HLPF:

... Examples, among others, of this support included the Regional Commissions’ Regional Forums to assist in the preparation of the VNR process for the HLPF and their key role as platforms for follow-up and review at the regional level, [as well as DESA/DSDGs annual global multi-stakeholder Science, Technology and Innovation Forum \(STI-Forum\)](#), a central part of the [Technology Facilitation Mechanism \(TFM\)](#). In connection with the high-level political forum on sustainable development, DESA together with partners has been organizing several high profile annual “special events” that serve as important platforms where key sectors can highlight and showcase their contributions to the implementation of the SDGs. These include the [SDG Business Forum \(https://www.sdgbusinessforum.org/\)](#), organized by DESA, Global Compact and the International Chamber of Commerce; the [Local and Regional Governments Forum \(https://www.global-taskforce.org/high-level-political-forum\)](#), organized by DESA, UN-Habitat, Local 2030 and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments; and a special event with Higher Education Institutions and Universities, organized by the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), a partnership between DESA, UNESCO, UN PRME initiative, UNU, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD and UNESCO. In addition, in connection with the 2019 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, DESA together with UN Office for Partnerships is organizing, for the first time, a special event on SDGs and Philanthropy to showcase the philanthropic sector’s contributions to the implementation of the SDGs.

- **Correction of references to UN-Energy**

We propose to correct the last sentence of **para 33 (p.15)** and the related footnote as follows:

Staff interviewed also noted role confusion around the existence of both UN-Energy and a ~~similar~~ [non-governmental](#) entity ~~—UN-Sustainable~~ Energy for All.

Footnote: <https://www.un-energy.org/> and <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/SEFA.pdf>  
<https://www.seforall.org/>

**OCHA management response:**

United Nations  Nations Unies  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director  
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

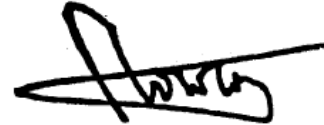
DATE: 4 June 2019

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: Mr. Mark Lowcock,  
DE: Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian  
Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator



SUBJECT: **Formal draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight  
OBJET: Services on the evaluation of the United Nations  
entities' preparedness, policy, coherence and early  
results associated with their support to the Sustainable  
Development Goals**

1. Thank you for your letter on the above subject dated 14 May 2019.
2. OCHA has reviewed the Formal draft report. We are submitting the attached additional comments for your consideration. Relevant reference sources to the supporting evidence have been provided as requested.
3. OCHA has no other formal comments to make on the report's content or its recommendations.

Copy to:

Ms Demetra Arapakos, OIOS

**OCHA Comments on the OIOS Evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals**

Paragraph Reference	Comments
<p>Paragraphs 17 and 18 including Figure B</p>	<p>OCHA's primary SDG support role is coordination. We therefore request that OCHA appear under the first column entitled "Coordination role" and that we are removed from the column entitled "Direct Service provision".</p>
<p>Paragraph 19 including Figure C</p>	<p>The Figure indicates that OCHA made no changes to its key documentation pre and post 2015. We request a reconsideration of OCHA's placement in the Figure which better reflects the changes we have made over this period and recognizes the Organization's central role in policy setting for collective action and in fostering greater synergies in humanitarian and development action in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. Three important reference sources which should be taken into consideration by OIOS are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the 2017 OCHA Annual Report which contains extensive references to OCHA's work in supporting nexus issues through the New Way of Working and Collective Outcomes in countries such as Chad, Mali, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Colombia and Ukraine. It also mentions our role in developing Multi-year Humanitarian Response Plans. The Annual Report can be accessed at: <a href="https://www.unocha.org/publication/ocha-annual-report/ocha-annual-report-2017">https://www.unocha.org/publication/ocha-annual-report/ocha-annual-report-2017</a></li> </ol>

2. The OCHA 2018-2021 Strategic Plan which identifies the SDGs as a major contextual driver. The document also references OCHA's role in the New Way of Working and our work on Collective Outcomes. See pages 5 and 12. The document can be accessed at:

<https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OCHA%202018-21%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>

3. We suggest a review of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, which is Chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and which is co-chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the UNDP Administrator. The website provides extensive resources which can be reviewed to verify OCHA's coordination role in this area including Country Progress Reports, Background documents, Workshop reports and other relevant materials. The website can be accessed at:

<https://www.un.org/jsc/content/joint-steering-committee;>

## **UNODC management response:**

### ***OIOS Final Draft Report: “Evaluation of United Nations entities’ preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals”***

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) welcomes the OIOS “Evaluation of United Nations entities’ preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals”. Considering, in particular, the context of further strengthening accountability and learning in the UN reforms initiatives, evaluating the preparedness, policy coherence, and early results associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is highly opportune. This evaluation offers a valuable insight in the positioning of the United Nations entities vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda and achievements made so far.

UNODC welcomes the findings of this important OIOS evaluation, in particular relating to UNODC’s role as thematic leader in the SDGs. This highlights the efforts made over the past years to adapting UNODC’s support to Member States to the SDGs. With the mandate to make the world safer from drugs and crime, UNODC is committed to continue as a thematic leader to support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which explicitly recognises the interrelationship between sustainable development and threats from crime, corruption, drugs and terrorism.

Furthermore, UNODC welcomes that its continuous efforts in further strengthening monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks in the context of the SDGs were highlighted by OIOS, especially relating to the new UNODC handbook: “Results-based Management and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Fostering strategic planning as well as interagency coordination and cooperation were essential tools for advancing alignment with the SDGs. Moreover, UNODC would like to reiterate the efforts made to fully mainstream the SDGs in its independent evaluation processes, including the web-based evaluation application “Unite Evaluations”, which allows reporting of evaluation results vis-à-vis the SDGs.

Finally, UNODC reiterates its commitment to fulfil the role as thematic leader and to provide comprehensive support to Member States in the implementation of the SDGs, as “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



**UNOG management response:**

Office des Nations Unies à Genève  United Nations Office in Geneva

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Yee Woo Guo  
A: Director  
Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 28 May 2019

FROM: Clemens M. Adams  
DE: Director  
Division of Administration, UNOG

REF.

SUBJECT: Confidential: OIOS-2019-01033 Formal draft report on the evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals

1. UNOG acknowledges receipt of your memorandum of 14 May 2019 transmitting the formal draft report on the evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  2. UNOG would like to indicate that it has not been consulted on the informal draft report and therefore would like to take this opportunity to provide comments on the formal draft report.
  3. In the report, UNOG has been classified for its primary SDG support role as "support function". A support function entity is defined as an entity providing administrative, logistical and/or other "back end" support to UN entities to enable them to undertake their respective SDG roles.
  4. While UNOG agrees with this classification, the report does not mention that UNOG's role is going beyond the provision of administrative services and back end support. UNOG plays a significant role for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially via the SDG Lab. For your ease of reference, please find attached the documentation submitted in the context of the survey.
  5. UNOG believes that its specific role has also been acknowledged by the fact that it has been included in the web-based survey, contrary to other entities providing support functions such as DM, DSS, DGACM, UNON and UNOV. However, UNOG regrets that this particularity is never mentioned in the report and would like to request to amend the final report accordingly.
  6. The SDG Lab could be mentioned as an example of an initiative to galvanize efficient SDG support at the global level (paragraph 32 of the report). SDG Lab is a multi-stakeholder initiative that contributes to the implementation of the SDGs by supporting Geneva based actors and beyond in leveraging the expertise and knowledge of different stakeholders to support cross-sectoral policy, practice and action. The SDG Lab created the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem which uses the convening power of the United Nations to leverage multi-stakeholder expertise to find solutions to SDG challenges. Its work has for example led to a partnership between the finance and development communities to create a pipeline of investable initiatives that will accelerate the SDGs at country level.
- cc. Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General, UNOG  
Ms. Nadia Isler, Director, SDG Lab  
Ms Sophie Veaudour, Chief, Financial Resources Management Service, UNOG  
Ms. Celine Noel, Chief, Finance Section, UNOG  
Mr. Hugues Noubissie, Special Assistant to the Director, Division of Administration, UNOG

## ITC management response:



TRADE IMPACT  
FOR GOOD

## MEMORANDUM

TO-A: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo,  
Director  
Inspection and Evaluation  
Division (IED)  
Office of Internal Oversight  
Services (OIOS)

REF: A2/50/8  
OIOS-2019-01033

THROUGH-VIA: GENEVA-  
GENÈVE:

FROM-DE: Ms. Arancha Gonzalez,  
Executive Director,  
International Trade Centre (ITC)

DATE: 22 May 2019

SUBJECT-OBJET: Formal draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals

1. Thank you for your memorandum dated 14 May 2019, transmitting the formal draft report of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. We appreciate the opportunity you have offered to ITC to comment on the informal and final drafts of the report.
3. ITC management welcomes the final draft report. It has considered the report's conclusions and recommendations, and acknowledges that they are not directly addressed to ITC. As ITC is a member of the UNSDG, it fully supports recommendation 1, to consider ways to include the mandate and activities of entities from the Peace and Security pillar, and the Management and Support entities not already included in UNSDG. ITC also supports recommendation 2, and looks forward to the development of a system-wide partnership framework under the leadership of EOSG/UNSDG.
4. ITC appreciates the quality of the review, and thanks OIOS and its staff for the good cooperation in conducting the review.

cc: Ms. Dorothy Tembo Deputy Executive Director  
Mr. Matthew Wilson, Chief Adviser, Office of the Executive Director, ITC  
Ms. Iris Hauswirth, Chief, Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance, ITC  
Mr. Miguel Jimenez Pont, Head, Evaluation Unit, ITC  
Ms. Marianne Schmitt, Associate Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ITC

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**ECE management response:**



**MEMORANDUM**

To: Eddie Yee Woo Guo, Director  
Inspection & Evaluation Division,  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

Ref.: 2019/OES/165

Date: 27 May 2019

From: Olga Algayerova,  
Executive Secretary

**Subject: UNECE Management response on the Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

1. I refer to your memorandum dated 14 May 2019 transmitting the formal draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the SDGs.
  2. While I note with appreciation the improvements by UNECE as evidenced by OIOS, to ensure effective support for member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNECE must continue to embrace change. The global scale of the 2030 Agenda requires intensive international cooperation and partnership, prompting us to rethink the focus of our activities and working methods.
  3. Beyond aligning the UNECE programme of work with the SDGs, I have launched a comprehensive exercise to enhance the impact of our work and to ensure that UNECE is fit for responding to emerging needs, development challenges and opportunities in the region through 2030. This includes, but is not limited to, expanding cooperation with our network of over 18,000 experts, fostering greater internal synergies and building closer partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders across the region to produce practical global public goods.
  4. The UNECE proposed programme budget for 2020 translates the continuous adaptation of UNECE reflected primarily by: (a) an increased focus on UNECE core strengths; and (b) an active use of the UNECE multi-sectoral expertise to tackle SDGs in a cross-sectoral, integrated manner and through innovative ways of working.
  5. I take this opportunity to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Report and for the ongoing constructive engagement between our respective offices.
- cc: Demetra Arapakos, Chief, Inspection and Evaluation, OIOS  
Catherine Haswell, Chief, Programme Management Unit, ECE

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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
Telephone: +41 (0)22 917 4144/6072  
Email: [executive.secretary@un.org](mailto:executive.secretary@un.org)

**ESCAP management response:**

ESCAP management expresses its appreciation to OIOS for undertaking a comprehensive, consultative and evidenced-based process in preparing the report, and for incorporating our initial responses and comments into the report.

ESCAP welcomes the findings of the present OIOS report and appreciates its coverage of some key measures instituted by ESCAP to strengthen its support for the SDGs, including having a high degree of change evident in strategic planning documentation and work programmes in line with ESCAP's coordinating role for the implementation of SDGs.

Best regards,

Adnan

**Mr. Adnan H. Aliani**  
Director  
Strategy and Programme Management Division  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
Office: +66 2288 1602 | [aliani.unescap@un.org](mailto:aliani.unescap@un.org)  
[www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)

**OHCHR management response:**

We have received the formal draft report of the OIOS on the evaluation of United Nations entities' preparedness, policy, coherence, and early results associated with their support to the SDGs on 15 May 2019, for our formal comments.

We thank you very much for this opportunity for another review. At the same time we would like to reiterate our previous comments of 4 April 2019, included below for your ease of reference and your kind consideration.

Please find attached OHCHR's Annual Report 2018 as additional new evidence. The report clearly demonstrates the links between our results and the SDGs. I hope this will be sufficient to support our suggested amendment and will be considered positively.

Kind regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Worrell**  
Chief,  
Policy, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Service (PPMES)  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

## Annex II:

Entities covered by the evaluation included:<sup>39</sup>

<b>DESA</b>	<b>Department of Economic and Social Affairs</b>
<b>DGACM</b>	<b>Department for General Assembly and Conference Management</b>
<b>DM</b>	<b>Department of Management</b>
<b>DPI</b>	<b>Department of Public Information</b>
<b>DPKO</b>	<b>Department of Peacekeeping Operations</b>
<b>DSS</b>	<b>Department of Safety and Security</b>
<b>ECA</b>	<b>Economic Commission for Africa</b>
<b>ECE</b>	<b>Economic Commission for Europe</b>
<b>ECLAC</b>	<b>Economic Commission for Latin America</b>
<b>ESCAP</b>	<b>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</b>
<b>ESCWA</b>	<b>Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</b>
<b>ITC</b>	<b>International Trade Centre</b>
<b>OCHA</b>	<b>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</b>
<b>ODA</b>	<b>Office of Disarmament Affairs</b>
<b>OHCHR</b>	<b>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights</b>
<b>OHRLLS</b>	<b>Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States</b>
<b>OLA</b>	<b>Office of Legal Affairs</b>
<b>OOSA</b>	<b>United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs</b>
<b>OSAA</b>	<b>United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa</b>
<b>UNTAD</b>	<b>United Nations Office on Trade and Development</b>
<b>UNEP</b>	<b>United Nations Environmental Programme</b>
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	<b>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	<b>United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees</b>
<b>UNODC</b>	<b>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</b>
<b>UNOG</b>	<b>United Nations Office at Geneva</b>
<b>UNON</b>	<b>United Nations Office at Nairobi</b>
<b>UNOV</b>	<b>United Nations Office at Vienna</b>
<b>UNRWA</b>	<b>United Nations Relief and Works Agency</b>
<b>UN-Women</b>	<b>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women</b>

Entities included in the evaluation were those subject to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME). These include: (1) the entities comprising the UN Secretariat; (2) UNHCR; (3) UNRWA; and (4) UN Women.

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<sup>39</sup> The composition of some entities changed post-data collection. These include: DPKO is now DPO – Department of Peace Operations; DM is now DMSPC – Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and DOS-Department of Operational Support; DPI is now DGC – Department of Global Communications.