



DELIVERING ON THE  
2030 AGENDA:  
OUR PROMISE FOR  
DIGNITY, PROSPERITY  
AND PEACE ON A  
HEALTHY PLANET

# UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REPOSITIONING

## Key Messages

### Reforming the UN Development System

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*"Our shared goal is a United Nations that is better positioned to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, humanity's boldest agenda to eradicate poverty, advance fair globalization and create a better future for all. To do so, our development system must operate as one that is greater than the sum of its parts. A United Nations that places sustainable development at the heart of all we do. A United Nations that is not about what individual entities do alone – but what we can and must do together for people and planet."*

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

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### Background

**The ambitious 2030 Agenda requires equally bold changes across the United Nations.**

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is an imperative for a safe and secure future of prosperity, opportunity and human rights for all. At a time where the world is faced with multiple interlinked crises, the 2030 Agenda offers a way forward for everyone, in every country, with a promise of leaving no one behind. There is growing momentum behind the Sustainable Development Goals, as civil society support grows, the private sector recognizes the benefits of engaging, and more and more leaders put their political weight behind this agenda.

**The UN must renew itself to better serve the world.** The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are universal, interlinked and indivisible, and demand that we reinvent ourselves to better serve countries and people. To bring about transformational change, we must develop new mindsets and capacities to respond to a comprehensive

and universal agenda; strengthen our capacity to mobilize partnership and financing at scale to support country priorities; and we must generate synergies across the UN development system to deliver greater results for people.

**This is the most ambitious and comprehensive change process of the UN development system in decades.** The landmark resolution agreed by all 193 countries on 31 May 2018 provides the mandates required for the Secretary-General and the UN system to take forward their collective responsibilities to make the UN fit for purpose to support the 2030 Agenda. This is part of a set of major interlinked reforms to ensure the UN is better positioned to prevent crises and vulnerabilities and deliver more effectively across all its mandates.

**Placing sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations.** The Secretary-General has assigned comprehensive responsibilities for

sustainable development to the Deputy Secretary-General. He has now received a mandate from Member States to institutionalize the function of development coordination, through a reinvigorated and strengthened system of Resident Coordinators – the UN leaders on the ground. Resident Coordinators – who up until now also served as representatives of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) – will have a full time focus on leading UN Country Teams, and will be better resourced to deliver. This will resolve a historic deficit in our coordination function, and institutionalize what works, across the board.

**Country-level results will be the litmus test of any reform.** To effectively deliver on the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, the Organization needs a new generation of UN Country Teams to be tailored to and determined by country-specific priorities and needs. The UN's joint planning instrument in countries – the UN Development Assistance Framework – will serve as a compact between the UN and countries around collective results. In the end, reform is about putting in place the right mechanisms, processes and institutional incentives to deliver results that make a real difference in the lives of people. UN country teams will also establish common back offices at the country level to support our various agencies. Today such integrated service centres exist in only 4 countries. This could lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in savings to reinvest in people.

**A UN fit for purpose at all levels. UN development entities at the global and regional level are also being transformed to respond to the heightened demands of the 2030 Agenda.** To enhance strategic direction and oversight of field operations, the Secretary-General has already made changes to the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) – the body that gathers the leaders of the 40 UN entities that support sustainable development on the ground. A Committee involving the UN leadership of the major operational entities was also created to advance humanitarian and development collaboration, to ensure more impactful UN action

in countries where humanitarian and development needs coexist. For the first time ever, a system-wide strategic document will provide a coherent vision at the global level for the system's response to the 2030 Agenda. The UN regional economic and social commissions are being strengthened to meet specific regional needs as countries move towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

**A fragmented funding base delivers a fragmented UN response to the SDGs.** Donor funding to the UN's development activities must be more predictable, sustainable, accountable and multi-year. To successfully deliver on this, the Secretary-General is putting in place a Funding Compact with partner countries.

**Partnerships will make-or-break the 2030 Agenda.** We will strengthen our capacity at all levels to step up the organization's engagement with civil society, the private sector, international financial institutions and others. We need a greater focus on partnerships, and at unprecedented scale.

**Accountability is the backbone of all efforts.** To ensure better strategic direction, oversight and accountability of the UN Development System, there will be improved monitoring and reporting on system-wide results to countries and UN governing bodies. Independent evaluations will also be strengthened to provide an impartial assessment of the UN's development activities. This will provide more transparency on resources and value for money.

**Next Steps:** The Secretary-General is committed to engaging all countries, UN entities and other partners as we transition to a renewed UN development system starting in January 2019. The Secretary-General will report to the Economic and Social Council on the progress in early 2019. He will also devise an implementation plan for the inception of the new Resident Coordinator system, which will be presented to Member States by mid-September 2018.