United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation and the Decent Work Agenda

A Trade Union Reference Manual

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Foreword

The United Nations Development System (UNDS) is being reformed with the chief aim of more effective and efficient implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, working as One United Nations (UN). In light of the ongoing economic and job crisis, and multiple attacks on the multilateral system—only intensified by the coronavirus epidemic—working together as One UN has never been more urgent. As a specialized UN agency, the ILO has a substantial role to play in the reform process and shows unwavering commitment to 2030 Agenda implementation.

The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) contributes to all Policy Outcomes, Enabling Outcomes, and policy drivers in four main areas: policy development and implementation; development cooperation; research; and ILO meetings and activities at national, regional, and global levels. Thus ACTRAV is uniquely tasked with ensuring that workers' representatives can effectively participate in the ILO, and that the views and concerns expressed by workers are integrated at all levels—from planning and execution to monitoring and evaluation. Its role in the UN reform process includes transmission of key reform messages to trade unions, and potentially, other UN entities at national or higher levels.

The themes addressed in this reference guide are aligned with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which highlights the importance of multilateralism in dealing with labour challenges and ushering in a "future of work" that mirrors our hopes. It also targets Policy Outcome 1 ("Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue"), Indicator 1.2.2. ("Number of workers' organizations that produce proposals to be considered in social dialogue mechanisms for policymaking"), and Enabling Outcome A ("Authoritative knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work") of the ILO 2020-2021 Programme and Budget.

The year 2020 inaugurates the decade of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs—especially SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth—delineate the international development framework and are to be translated into action on the national level. To be successful, implementation demands greater institutional capacity of workers' organizations to effectively contribute to the process. Accordingly, this manual also feeds into ILO Output A.4 ("Strengthened ILO partnerships within the multilateral system for greater integration of the human-centred approach to the future of work into global debates and policies for achieving the SDGs").

In recent years, there has been growing demand from trade union constituents for ACTRAV assistance in the form of technical support, sharing of information, and raising of awareness about the UN reform process—particularly regarding the Cooperation Framework (CF) and the role of trade unions in relation to it. As discussed in *Trade Unions in the Balance*,[1] depending on their country's tradition of social dialogue and practices, trade unions face many challenges that in part reflect their own capacity constraints, especially with regards to policy formulation, engagement, and influence. Hence it is crucial we support their efforts in building their skills and capacity for better policy engagement outcomes.

This document seeks to guide trade unions and encourage them to take on more assertive roles in processes shaping development policy at national, regional, and global levels. It reflects ACTRAV's will to provide trade union constituents with the necessary knowledge to prepare and submit well-formulated bi- and tripartite social dialogue proposals to their governments and other social partners. The manual focuses on CFs, Common Country Analyses (CCAs), and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Implications of the COVID-19 crisis for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are highlighted, and guidance is provided on policy areas that trade unions might address in their engagement and dialogue at various levels.

Trade unions can use this manual to more effectively contribute to the implementation, monitoring, and outcomes of the 2030 Agenda process, focusing particularly on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) as well as regional and global sustainable development platforms, such as the High-Level Political Forum.

The present document is the fruit of an ACTRAV team effort. Special thanks go to Ariel Castro, Hilma Mote, and Grayson Koyi for revision and final touches, and also to Hilda Sánchez, former ILO ACTRAV Regional Desk Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, for preparing the first draft.

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Maria Helena André,
Director, ACTRAV
December 2020

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[1]   J. Visser: *Trade Unions in the Balance: ILO ACTRAV Working Paper* (Geneva, ILO, 2019).

Abbreviations

ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
JSC	National/UN Joint Steering Committee
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDS	UN Development System
UNSDG	UN Sustainable Development Group
VNR	Voluntary National Reviews
WHO	World Health Organization
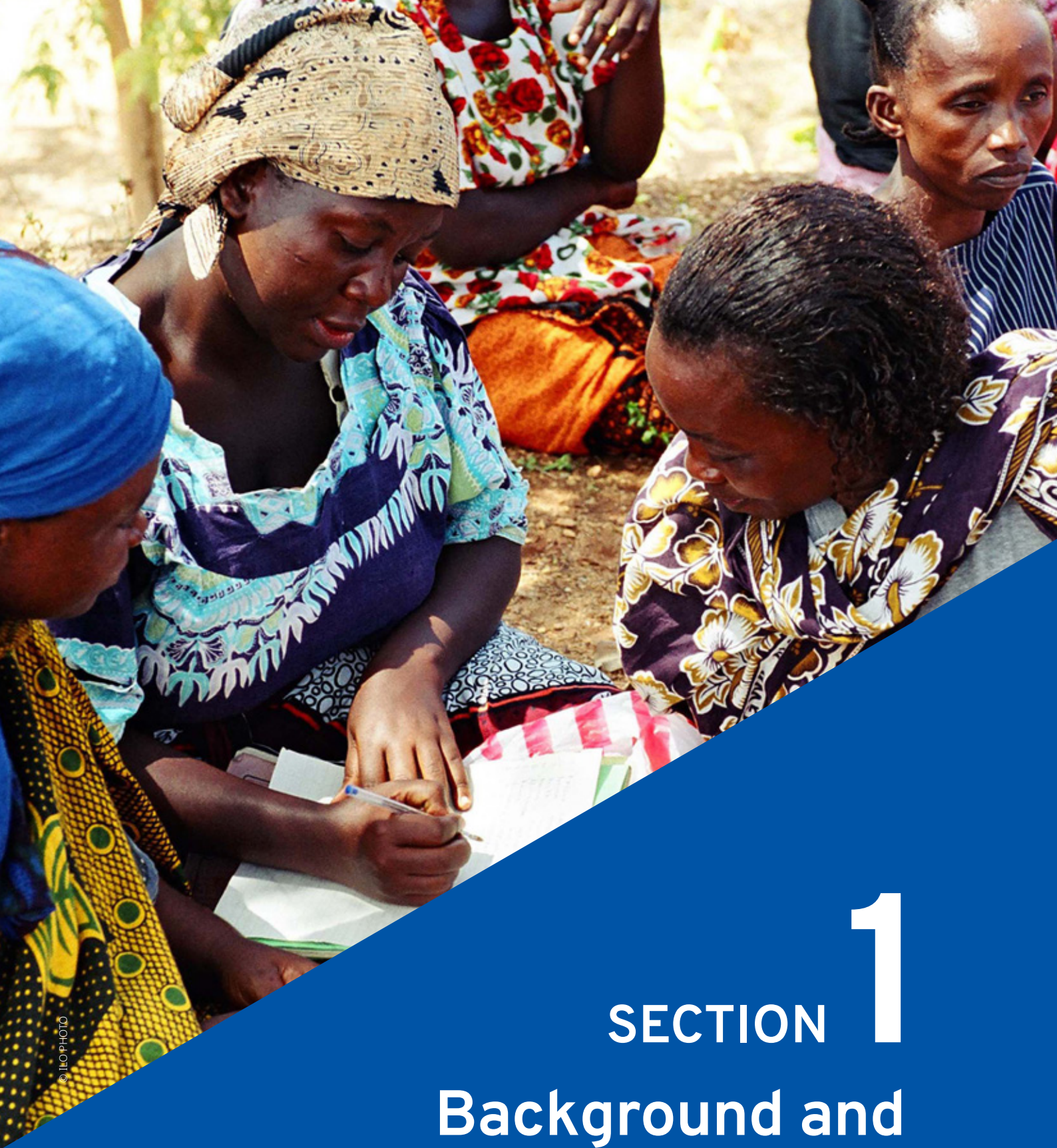
SECTION 1

Background and introduction

Section 1:

Background and introduction

The world is facing multiple development challenges ranging from catastrophic effects of climate change to multidimensional forms of poverty and inequality, in addition to growing unemployment, among youth and women especially. On 31 May 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/72/279,[2] which acknowledges that effectively meeting the pervasive challenges of the world today requires global and integrated responses, that no single UN agency alone could provide.

The General Assembly agreed to reposition the UNDS in order to offer countries greater support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.[3] The reforms adopted are expected to result in greater coherence, efficiency, and integration of UN organization and operations, thus countering recurring scepticism about the value of multilateralism and the ability of multilateral institutions to carry out their missions in today's global order.

Proposals approved by the member states in 2018 include restructuring of UN peacekeeping and security operations, modernization of UN management, and repositioning of the UNDS. UN management reform calls for simplifying procedures and decentralizing decisions of the UN Secretariat, for greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability. UNDS reform is aimed at greater coordination and impact, addressing concerns about fragmentation and redundant actions, especially at the country level.

Examples of key reforms:

▶ As of 1 January 2019, a newly empowered and independent Resident Coordinator (RC) system is in place. It is dedicated to orchestrating development activities of UN entities and helping to ensure sustained social, economic, and environmental gains at the national and regional levels, while leaving no one behind.

▶ Under direct RC leadership and supervision are strong, multidisciplinary UN Country Teams (UNCTs).

▶ There will be a transition towards UN common operations and premises (UN Houses).

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[2] https://un.org.me/UNDS_repositioning/20180604_Annex%202-%20Summary%20of%20key%20mandates%20Resolution%20UNDS%20repositioning%204%20June%202018.pdf.

[3] This section is based on the UNDS Reform FAQ (https://reform.un.org/content/un-development-system-reform-101). The Secretary-General submitted proposals in two reports to the Economic and Social Council, in June and December 2017, as follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review: (i) UN: *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all*, Report of the Secretary-General, Economic and Social Council, Jul 2017, A/72/124–E/2018/3; and (ii) UN: *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet*, Report of the Secretary-General, Economic and Social Council, Dec 2017, A/72/684– E/2018/7.

Some expected benefits:

▶ A more collaborative, coherent UNDS will bring together all relevant UN functions, resources, and skills at the global, regional, and country levels in support of the 2030 agenda.

▶ A better adapted and more responsive UN presence in each country, focused on national priorities, will lead to economies of scale and greater collaboration between UN agencies, funds, and programmes.

▶ Improved funding practices of donors and member states will mean more predictable and flexible resources incentivizing integrated UN-wide support for countries.

As a specialized UN agency, the ILO plays a major part in the reform process and is firmly committed to effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

▶ The ILO Director-General is a **member of the UN Sustainable Development Group** (UNSDG) Core Group, which provides strategic governance and oversight. The Core Group is composed of the executive heads of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Food and Agriculture Organization; ILO; UN Development Programme; UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; UN Population Fund; Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Children's Fund; UN Women; World Food Programme; and World Health Organization (WHO); as well as a rotating member representing the UN Regional Economic Commissions.

▶ The ILO Director-General also co-chairs the UNSDG **Strategic Partnerships Results Group**.

▶ The ILO is a member of the **UNSDG Advisory Group** for the UNDS transition.

▶ Senior managers and specialists from the offices of the ILO Deputy Director-Generals for **Management and Reform, Field Operations and Partnership, and Policy** represent the ILO in the four UNSDG result groups on **SDG implementation, strategic financing, business innovation, and strategic partnerships**.

▶ ILO Regional Directors continue to work with regional UNSDG entities.

The ILO's three constituencies were able to share views on the challenges and opportunities that UNDS reform presented for each of them, and the ILO as a whole.

The relevant Governing Body decision (Oct–Nov 2018, GB334/INS/4, para. 188)[4] is given in the text box.

> The Governing Body: (a) welcomed the United Nations General Assembly resolution "Repositioning of the United Nations Development System in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" (A/RES/72/279) adopted on 31 May 2018 and the implications for the work of the ILO; (b) requested the Director-General to take leadership in ensuring tripartism and the specific role of the social partners in the implementation of the resolution and related interagency coordination mechanisms, taking fully into account the views and positions expressed in the Governing Body on this matter at its current and previous sessions; (c) decided to review the implications, challenges and opportunities of the UN reform for the ILO at its March 2019 session on the basis of a comprehensive analysis to be prepared by the Office, in consultation with the constituents and a plan of action to implement the reform addressing issues and challenges expressed by the Governing Body, including how to preserve the ILO's tripartite governance structure, normative mandate and programmatic priorities; (d) took note of the strong commitment expressed by the Governments to the principle of tripartism and the importance of the role that the social partners should play in the implementation of the reformed UN system; (e) requested the Director-General to organize regular consultations with the constituents on, inter alia, the promotion of tripartism in the context of the reform of the UN development system with a view to feeding into the ILO's strategy for its engagement in the reform process (and to foster dialogue between Geneva and New York); (f) expressed understanding for the demands of the International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organisation of Employers to be granted observer status in the United Nations General Assembly in order to allow for their participation in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly with respect to the UN reform process, and agreed to bring this matter to the next Governing Body session to consider further appropriate action; and (g) decided that the cost of the doubling of the cost-sharing contribution to the Resident Coordinator system for 2019, estimated at US$2.2 million, would be financed in the first instance from savings that might arise under Part I of the budget for 2018–19 or, failing that, through the use of the provision for unforeseen expenditure, in Part II. Should that not prove possible, the Director-General would propose alternative methods of financing at a later stage in the 2018–19 biennium.

ILO constituents also made key demands, chief among them including:

▶ the need to respect the ILO's unique tripartite governance structure and normative functions

▶ assurance of the independence of ILO processes and mechanisms and the important role of social partners at country level at country level

▶ greater clarity regarding how the ILO's normative mandate will be reflected in national planning processes

Employers, workers, and governments alike have stressed the importance of having RCs recognize the unique mission of the ILO and the special status of ILO constituents as decision-makers within it.

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4 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_677387.pdf.

1.1. Purpose of reference manual

Since the creation of the ILO in 1919, tripartism has been a defining feature in the fulfilment of its social mandate. ACTRAV cultivates productive and constructive relations between the ILO and workers' organizations by acting as a link between them.

ACTRAV has developed this reference manual on UN reforms and CFs to educate and mobilize workers' organizations. towards ensuring that they play an important pro-active role in influencing and shaping processes, especially in the implementation of the reforms at country level. It is a primary resource for them to keep abreast of UNDS changes, and it provides related information on processes and governance, the roles and positions of the ILO and its constituents, and CF and DWCP linkages.

Its broad aim is to assist trade unions in developing their own informed, context-specific route to proactive engagement with the UN reform process for full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, as highlighted in the ILO Centenary Declaration. This includes promotion of coherent policy that favours a human-centred approach to the future of work—recognizing the strong, complex, critical links between the social dimension; trade and investments; and financial, economic, and environmental policies.

In this manual, we invite trade unions to strive for meaningful involvement, engagement, and participation in the various UN processes as well as adherence to the decent work pillars at the country level. Trade unions should also be aware of the complex effects—yet to be fully understood—of COVID-19 on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We recommend this manual be read alongside the ACTRAV Trade Union Reference Manual on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the ACTRAV trade union survey report addressing the likely impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of SDG8. The Trade Union Reference Manual (2016) details the components of the 2030 Agenda, the 17 SDGs, and the opportunities that the SDGs, targets, and indicators provide for advancing trade union objectives aligned with the Decent Work Agenda.

On the other hand, the survey report reviews international trade union perspectives on the likely consequences—positive and negative—of COVID-19 on national implementations of SDG 8, and it suggests policy areas trade unions might weigh in on when working with governments and other parties shaping development on the national stage.

1.2. Organization of manual

The manual has **five** sections:

▶ **Section 1** provides background and an introduction for this manual, describing its purpose, target audience, and intended use.

▶ **Section 2** offers responses to key questions trade unions commonly have about UN reforms and how they affect their work. It addresses the nature of reforms, the governance framework, the roles of RCs and UNCTs, and entry points for trade union action.

▶ **Section 3** explains CFs, CCAs, and the strategic role of workers' organizations in shaping them.

▶ **Section 4** describes how DWCPs merge with the CF for achieving decent work objectives within the scope of the 2030 Agenda, and how trade unions can ensure decent work priorities are integrated into the CF.

▶ **Section 5** discusses the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs, the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, the ILO Policy Framework for Tackling the Economic and Social Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis, and the major part that workers' organizations have to play in effectively responding to the pandemic.

SECTION **2**

An Overview of the UN Reforms: Some key trade union Q&As

Section 2:

Overview of UN reforms: Q&A for trade unions

This section provides answers to common questions trade unions have about UN reforms and how they affect their work. Subsequent sections elaborate on aspects touched on here.

2.1. What is the UN reform process?

▶ Initiated by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in 2017, the current phase of the reform process aims to make the UN as a whole more effective in fulfilling its mission.

▶ It is a direct response to the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, which presents a historic challenge—and opportunity—for multilateralism.

▶ It is the most ambitious and comprehensive UNDS transformation process since at least the 1960s, affecting every UN agency, department, office, regional commission, and field operation engaged in development work.

▶ It applies universally to all UNDS entities and UNCTs.

▶ It impacts work at the global, regional, and country level, shaping the development of new strategic planning approaches and instruments, accountability systems, administrative arrangements, and budgetary practices.

▶ To see the reform process through, the UNSDG[5] was restructured, a Deputy Secretary-General becoming its new Chair, for greater oversight and strategic orientation aimed to facilitate the work of UNCTs.

The reform focuses on three areas: peace and security, management, and development. The goal of the development reforms is to make the UNDS fit for purpose, helping member states implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the 17 SDGs.

▛▀

"Reform is not an end in itself. The purpose of reform is simple and clear: to best position the United Nations to deliver on humanity's boldest agenda: the sustainable development goals. To better serve people: People in need. People with hope. People who look to us to help improve their lives and to improve our world at a time of spiralling challenges and rapid, dramatic change"[6]

▶ UN Secretary-General António Guterres

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[5]   The UNSDG is the successor to the UN Development Group and is open to membership to the 40 UN entities that contribute to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda at the country level.

[6]   https://reform.un.org/content/development-reform

The reforms are also a collective UN response to recurring doubts about the merit of multilateralism and the relevance of multilateral institutions given today's global challenges. They seek to demonstrate that One UN can more effectively, efficiently, and transparently support national development efforts.

2.2. What is the (new) reformed structure like?

The UNDS reforms are based on seven building blocks (**Figure 1**). National coordination for development initiatives is the responsibility of RCs, who represent the UN Secretary-General for this purpose. This new organization has been adopted to promote collaboration between agencies, funds, and programmes for the achievement of national development priorities. The **129 RCs** are the cornerstone of a coherent, coordinated UNDS delivering integrated support for all SDGs.

Figure 1: UNDS reform building blocks:
(source: https://news.un.org/es/story/2018/05/1434911)

Maximizing UNDS impact	A system-wide strategic document to ensure collective responsibility and accelerated alignment of UNDS support with the **2030 Agenda**
New generation of Country Teams	With enhanced skills, **optimized physical presence** and a consolidaded and effective common back-office
A reivigorated Resident coordinator system	With an empowered and impartial UN Resident Coordinator at its centre
Reconfigured regional approach	A revamped and streamlined regional approach, with a clear division of labour among entities of the UNDS at the regional level
More accountable leadership and better governance	Improved **strategic guidance** and **coordination**, together with increased **accountability**, **transparency** and **oversight**
A system-wide approach to partnerships	That allows for **innovation** and expanded partnerships, including in support of **South-South cooperation** and which enhances **transparency and integrity**
A new Funding Compact	A **better funded UN system** to support successful delivery of the 2030 Agenda

▶ On 1 January 2019, RCs took on their new positions as the highest-ranking UNDS representatives, leading 131 UNCTs that report directly to the UN Secretary-General and serve 164 countries and territories, to deliver a collective response to national needs and ensure system-wide accountability on the ground (**Figures 2 and 3**).

▶ Under the reforms, UNCTs are more clearly and effectively accountable to host governments, as are RCs to country-level chiefs of UN entities and to the UN Secretary-General.

▶ A new generation of UNCTs—with novel organizations, roles, and profiles—are now better adapted to country contexts and prepared to deliver shared results through the new CF, which replaces the former UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and constitutes the main strategic instrument for targeting national needs and priorities.

▶ An upgraded Development Operations Coordination Office and regional units together provide a more suitable support infrastructure serving RCs and UNCTs.

▶ Donor funding is now centred on more predictable and flexible resources, allowing the UNDS to tailor its support, enhance the delivery of results, and ensure greater transparency and accountability for allotted resources.

Figure 2: New structure for implementation of 2030 Agenda
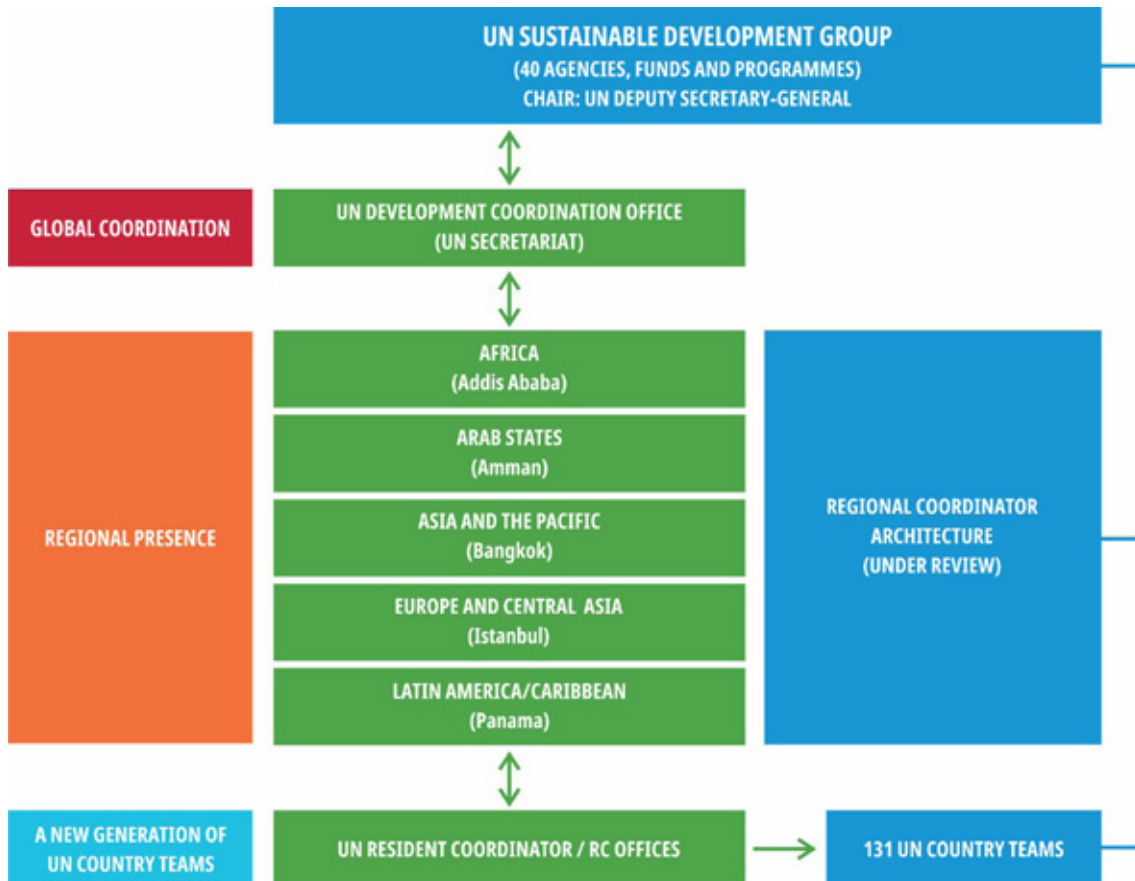
Figure 3: "A New Way of Working Together for the 2030 Agenda"

2.3. Who does what in the reform process?

▶ The UN Secretary-General established a transition team under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General to support the implementation of all aspects of the reform.

▶ Various interagency mechanisms under different UN entities have been deployed to promote development priorities; and the UNSDG, convened by the Deputy Secretary-General, works with all principals to provide strategic guidance and oversight.

▶ Town halls with staff at HQ or in the field, and consultations with member states, regularly take place.

▶ A working group composed of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the UN Development Programme, the UN Development Operations Coordination Office, the Department of Management, and the Office of Legal Affairs facilitated the transformation of the RC system and the transfer of the UN Development Operations Coordination Office to the Secretariat, where it is now known as the Development Coordination Office.

2.4. What are the duties and responsibilities of the RC?[7]

▶ The RC is the highest-ranking UNDS representative at country level, reporting to the Secretary-General, and must:

▶ report annually to host Government on system-wide operations of UN in country

▶ represent UN at highest state levels and, together with representatives of agencies involved, fosters engagement with Government, civil society, bilateral and multilateral partners, academia, and private sector, helping UNDS target national needs, priorities, and sustainable development challenges, to advance 2030 Agenda and to urge more and faster action for achievement of SDGs

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[7] This subsection is based on the UN Resident Coordinator Generic Job Description (https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Generic%20RC%20Job%20Description%20Final_1%20Jan%202019.pdf).

▶ lead UNCT in development, monitoring, and reporting of CF, facilitate UNCT implementation of CF in concert with Government, and in collaboration with diverse partners, to ensure alignment of agency programmes and pooled interagency funding with national development needs

▶ support and catalyse work of UNCT members, including non-resident agencies, [8]so that they may reach agency-specific goals pertaining to strategic planning; development economics; partnerships and development finance; data and results management; reporting; communications; and advocacy

▶ promote fundamental principles of UN Charter, including respect for human rights and gender equality, and uphold commitment to leave no one behind in reaching SDGs, starting with those furthest from their achievement

▶ with other UNDS entities, build and mobilize strategic national and subnational partnerships with civil society; **trade unions and employers' organizations**; youth networks; private sector; legislators; academia; media; think tanks; and broader development community to further 2030 Agenda

▶ with governments, UNCT, and relevant regional entities, develop knowledge-sharing and collaboration, South-South and triangular exchanges, and multicounty and transboundary initiatives in pursuit of more system-wide results and impact in national implementation of 2030 Agenda

▶ provide governance and oversight of system-wide country financing instruments; pursue public and private funding on behalf of UNDS for joint UN efforts, system-wide plans, initiatives in support of CF, and 2030 Agenda implementation

▶ coordinate responses of UN and relevant humanitarian entities in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 46/182 and related resolutions, facilitating linkages between humanitarian and development programming for enhanced, sustainable impact

▶ in conflict and post-conflict settings, facilitate integration of UNCT work with UN peacekeeping or political missions, to maximize efforts in the interest of resilience, prevention, peace, and transition planning

▶ promote staff learning and application of staff rules and policies—including gender parity and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment—as well as principles of UN system leadership framework[9] in coordination with respective entities

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[8]   The ILO has a field network of 36 country offices, whereas there are 129 RC offices. Hence, in many countries, the ILO operates as a non-resident agency. In 21 countries, a National Coordinator (NC) oversees ILO work, and ILO presence in many countries is limited to development cooperation projects and associated staff. (M Oumarou: *Update on the Reform of the UN Development System*, Oct 2019)

[9]   https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/Leadership.pdf.

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2.5. What are the roles and functions of the UNCT?

UNCTs are the main vehicle for interagency coordination and decision-making at the country level. They are led by the RC and composed of representatives of the UN entities conducting development activities in a specific country. UNCTs can also include representatives of entities from the wider UN system, such as the World Bank. UNCT meetings are held at least once a month. Each UNCT defines its specific working arrangements, which may include the creation, with RC support, of coordination mechanisms that report to it. The UNCT is consulted for decisions to be made by the RC. In the absence of consensus within the UNCT on strategic CF objectives or the allocation of UNCT-wide pooled funding, the RC has the final word, per the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

UNCT members collaborate to provide an integrated response to SDG-related needs and priorities and ensure mutual accountability. Specifically, UNCT staff is accountable on two levels: to their respective entities for various missions, as appropriate, and to their respective RC for overall results, as defined by interagency agreements and the CF. A strong CF, drawn up with the host Government, is thus the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of UN development activities in each country.

UNCT membership provides the RC with policy and technical support, and contributes to planning, tracking, analysis, and reporting processes; information management; communication; and advocacy in relation to CF implementation and in support of the 2030 Agenda. UNCTs also provide annual reporting to governments, through the RCs, on the efficacy of UNCT efforts to help implement the 2030 Agenda.

Overarching responsibilities of UNCT:

▶ **Strategic planning and programming**—to ensure that UN development operations are focused on advancing sustainable development without losing sight of the goals to eradicate all forms of poverty and to leave no one behind, in accordance with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda

▶ **Communications and advocacy**—to reach SDGs together, without discrimination between groups, upholding human rights and gender equality

▶ **Common services**—to provide optimal support on the ground, through pooling of resources and greater coordination, transparency, and efficiency of UN development activities

▶ **Funding/resource mobilization**—to optimize financial and human resources aimed at collective system support for the 2030 Agenda

2.6. How do the reforms affect the ILO and its mandate?

The UNDS reforms impact ILO and trade union operations at the national, regional, and global levels. The ILO Governing Body has acknowledged that the reforms are an opportunity for the ILO to demonstrate the unique role and value of tripartism, normative action, and social dialogue, and to widen its agenda and its (and its constituents') influence, for the promotion of decent work and international labour standards.

Worthy of note here is the ILO Centenary Declaration—widely adopted in a special UN General Assembly Resolution (Resolution A/73/L.117)[10] —which:

> stresses that full and productive employment and decent work for all is one of the key elements of sustainable development, and should therefore be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation; resolves to create conditions for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities. The resolution also:

> requests the United Nations funds, programmes, specialized agencies and financial institutions to continue to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in their policies, as well as to consider the integration of the policy contents of the International Labour Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, in order to inform the work of the United Nations country teams, as appropriate, and in line with national priorities.

The work of the UNCTs should include the promotion of policy coherence in the advancement of decent work at national level.

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10   https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/342.

2.7. What requests has the ILO made on behalf of constituents?

▶ The job description of RCs must state that national workers' and employers' organizations are key stakeholders with whom the RC must collaborate at country level when formulating and implementing the CCA and CF, especially in relation to SDGs of relevance to the ILO mandate.

▶ UNDS entities must be informed about the relevance of regular tripartite dialogue with international workers' and employers' organizations, especially at the global level.

▶ The International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organization of Employers should be granted observer status at the UN General Assembly.

▶ To monitor the UN reform process and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ITUC and IOE should be allowed to participate in UN Economic and Social Council activities.

▶ Common UN premises should provide visibility for the ILO and meeting spaces for representatives of its constituencies.

2.8. How will implementation of the reform be monitored and evaluated?[11]

▶ Implementation of the new RC system will be reported annually to the UN Economic and Social Council Operational Activities Segment.

▶ The UNDS is committed to providing better access to data on achievement of country SDG priorities, such as through online platforms that track UN actions taken to reach a given SDG and indicate which activities are being funded through the system.

▶ In 2019, with the support of the UN Evaluation Group, the UNDS established mechanisms for enhancing the quality and credibility of UNDAF evaluations, better tailoring and harmonizing UN country-level activities aimed at meeting urgent national priorities, and contributing to compilation of data on the accomplishments of UN support measures regionally and globally.

▶ UNDS reform will only be successful if the greater support offered by the UN to countries allows them to progress more swiftly towards SDGs.

Indicators of success:

1. quality, coherence, and reliability of policy support provided by UN to governments

2. capacity to identify, design, or back new partnerships affording countries access to novel sources of financing and expertise for their national priorities

3. enhanced ownership by member states and host governments of the UNDS and its coordination

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[11] https://reform.un.org/content/un-development-system-reform-101.

4. discipline of UN system entities in acting as one to support countries, reducing transaction costs for its partners

5. how efficiently and effectively support is delivered

2.9. What unique advantages do trade unions offer to the reform process?

▶ Trade unions posses unparalleled skills and expertise in the promotion of social dialogue, collective bargaining, and existing mechanisms for national implementation of international labour standards.

▶ Unique experience they have gained from negotiations with governments and employers is valuable for the development process and its outcomes.

▶ The voice and influence of their membership are strengths, as they bridge all sectors of the economy, formal and informal; both genders; the rural and urban divide; and religious differences.

▶ They deeply understand the importance of securing a high standard of living for all through growth in decent, productive employment; reduction of income poverty and inequality; improvement of human development indicators; and extension of basic universal social protection—all of which are fundamental to sustainable and inclusive, economic and social development.

▶ Trade unions are unlike other institutions of civil society (NGOs). The revised RC job description provides the basis for ILO country offices to demand RCs and UNCTs treat workers' and employers' organizations as special constituents with a broader socioeconomic and political mandate than NGOs by virtue of their membership.

2.10. What are the channels for trade union participation?

Trade unions and employers' organizations are explicitly mentioned in the 2019 UNSDG guidance document.[12] The revised RC job description refers to both as entities with which the RC should cooperate at country level when coordinating UN support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the CF process.

The CF is primarily a partnership compact between the UN and a national government. It is as at once "a commitment to a broad range of stakeholders" and "a vehicle for identifying development solutions through inclusive dialogue."[13] Central to the reform, the CF confirms the commitment to universal values, driving UN collective action at country level. Entity-specific country programming documents—such as those defining DWCPs, in the case of the ILO—are derived from the CF, and not the other way around. Prior to signature of the CF, a review of the UNCT organization must be undertaken to ensure it has the capacities to deliver on stipulated commitments.

However, in order to draw up a CF, a CCA must be completed. During this independent process, national development priorities to receive UN support are identified and must be approved. The CCA "examines progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks vis-à-vis a country's commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda taking into account the UN norms and standards, and the principles of the UN Charter, including as reflected in the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles."[14]

Trade unions should take initiative during the CCA process to advance their decent work agenda by:

▶ attending and actively participating in meetings organized by RCs and UNCTs

▶ inviting RCs and UNCTs to informational sessions

▶ participating in sustainable development forums at the national level through the UN regional economic commissions

▶ approaching ILO country and regional offices for assistance, including direct technical support from ACTRAV field specialists

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12 UN: *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework—Internal Guidance*, United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2019). https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid

▶ participating in regional and global sustainable development forums, such as annual Regional Forums on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

▶ actively participating in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national sustainable development initiatives

▶ continuously building their internal capacities and knowledge base for policy engagements at all levels

▶ ensuring their inclusion in key national, regional, and global events

▶ where possible, assigning special officers to these tasks internally

2.11. What is the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of SDGs?

The health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19 have left many workers jobless and their livelihoods threatened. From the perspective of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, COVID-19 is a tremendous challenge to securing full and productive employment, decent work, and affordable universal social protection. The 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Report notes the following pertinent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic:

▶ An estimated 71 million additional people will have been driven into extreme poverty in 2020, the first increase in global poverty since 1998.[15]

▶ Underemployment and unemployment caused by the pandemic is thought to have greatly impacted approximately 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy—that is, half the world's working population—slashing their incomes by 60 per cent during the first months of the crisis.

ACTRAV Director Maria Helena André, offered the following perspective on COVID-19 and its implications for multilateralism and SDGs in an interview held in April 2020:

> The full-scale effect of COVID-19 on sustainable development efforts at the national, regional and global levels is yet to be determined. However, and without a doubt, the crisis has more than anything revealed that, even in the current challenging times, [...] Goal 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth is the most wide-ranging response measure as it contains social, economic, and environmental dimensions. It contains targets on social inclusion, decent work, sustained economic growth, equitable distribution of wealth, and environmental preservation. In addition, SDG 8 has already called on all of us to critically rethink and change our relations with the environment, accumulation and consumption modes, and behaviours.[16]

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[15] Lost incomes, limited social protection, and rising prices mean that even those who previously enjoyed secure livelihoods may have been exposed to poverty and hunger.

[16] ILO: *Multilateralism, SDGs and COVID-19: What role for workers' organisations?* [interview with MH André] (2020). https://www.ilo.org/actrav/media-center/news/WCMS_742143/lang--en/index.htm.

While the full extent of the impact on decent work and progress towards achieving SDGs, and especially goal 8, is still not clear given the changing public health and economic situation, the ACTRAV report on COVID-19 and SDG 8[17] shows there are signs the crisis has also spurred positive developments, such as recognition for essential workers and strengthening of social protection schemes. It is nonetheless clear that other areas will require sustained, accelerated action on all levels to achieve 2030 targets. The ACTRAV report also reveals that the impact of the pandemic varies vastly across between countries, industries, and groups of workers. Thus, any recovery strategy needs to integrate the voices of vulnerable workers, including those already struggling for their livelihood before the pandemic.

André also emphasized that all participating trade unions must pull their weight to help restore economies and employment:

> Making progress on SDGs [...] critically depends on a number of interrelated factors. First, it is [about] social partners' workers, employers, governments, and development agencies [participating] more effectively in the United Nations Development System to respond quickly [to matters of] policy and programmes. Second, [it requires the resolve of national leaders] to keep resources committed to the set SDG objectives, and their ability to adjust to new emerging policy demands and initiatives. Third, [it depends on] the amount of resources (human and financial) mobilized locally and through global and regional multi-stakeholder partnerships to address the immediate and long-term challenges. Finally, [there must be a] political understanding that, to a large extent, the measures being taken to respond to COVID-19 are part of the implementation of [the] 2030 Agenda, albeit induced by the crisis.[18]

In general—and specifically in relation to the UN reforms, the SDG process at the national level, and policy options to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic—ACTRAV stands ready to assist trade unions in various ways (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: How ACTRAV can assist trade unions

Maximizing opportunities to shape CF/UNDAF processes

Providing solid Decent Work diagnostic instrument to serve as CCA input

Completing substantive revision of DWCP and UNDAF guidance documents, while ensuring 4 strategic objectives of DW Agenda are covered

Offering concrete guidance on how DWCP priorities and outcomes can directly contribute to UNDAF, as effective vehicles for achieving Decent Work results in context of 2030 Agenda

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[17] ILO: *The likely impact of COVID-19 on SDG 8: Baseline study*, ACTRAV (2020).

[18] Ibid
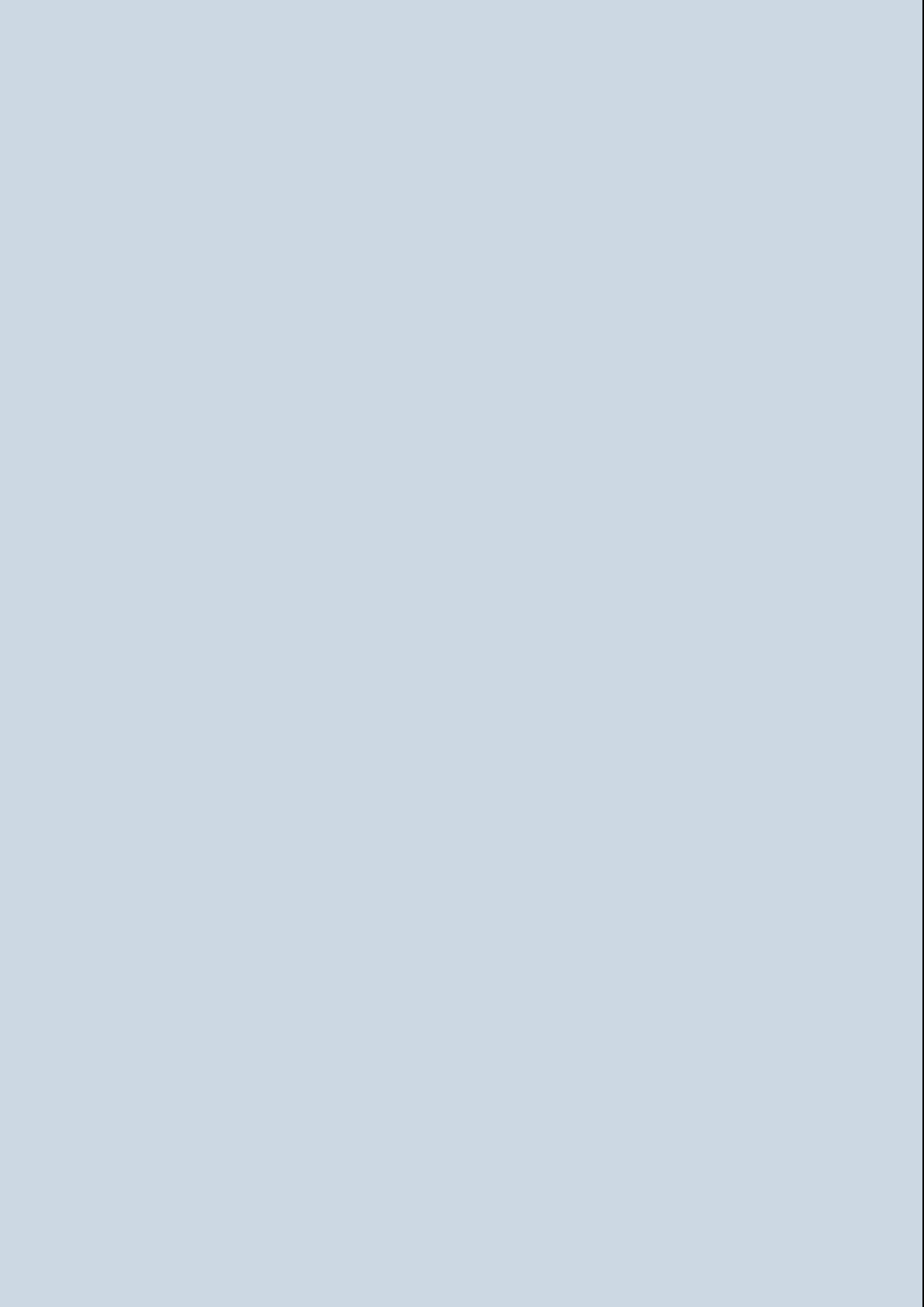
SECTION **3**

Cooperation Framework (CF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA)

Section 3:

Cooperation Framework (CF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA)

In this section we explain the new CF, the CCA process, and the strategic role of workers' organizations in informing both.

3.1. Cooperation Framework (CF)[19]

The CF is a primary tool articulating UNDS expectations and guiding major UNDS contributions at the country level, in order to expeditiously reach SDGs while leaving none behind.

The UNDAF has been redubbed the Cooperation Framework to more accurately reflect the nature of the current relationship between governments (with those they represent) and the UNDS cooperating to achieve the SDGs. The new approach requires that country programmes led by specific UN agencies be defined through the CF, and it prioritizes the most transformative sustainable development choices for the host country. This is a shift from the siloed vision of the Millennium Development Goals to a more integrated effort guided by the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Figure 5: Five-year CF cycle
(source: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework-Internal Guidance, UNSDG, 2019)

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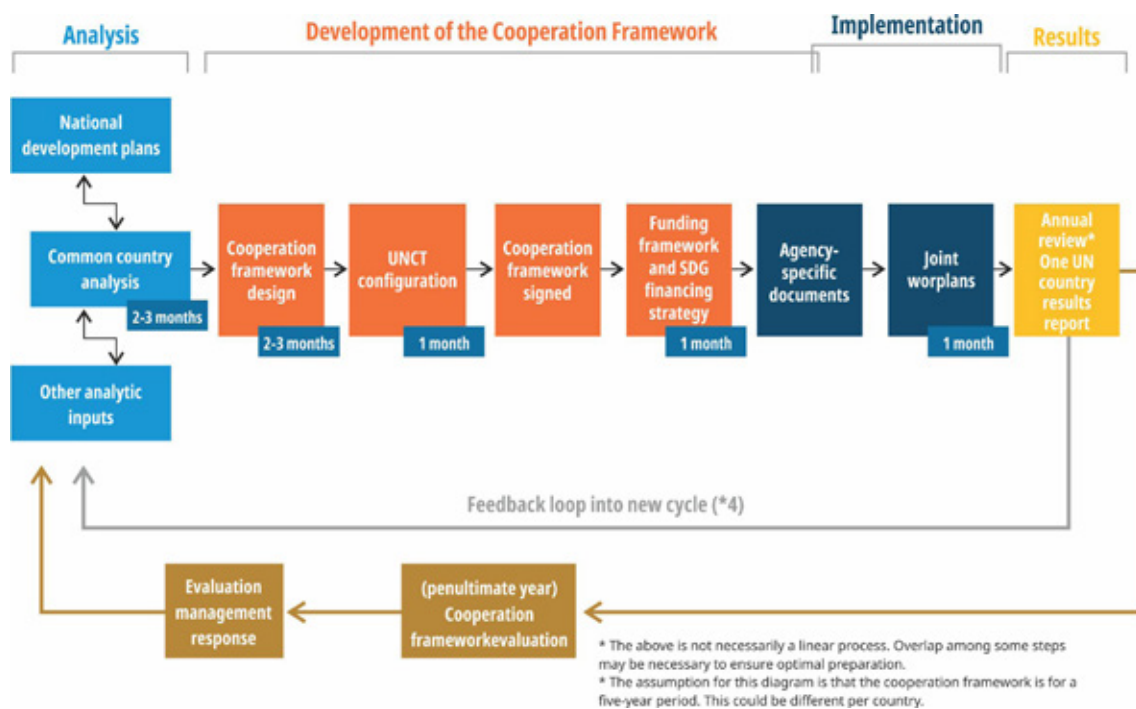
[19]   Much of Section 3 is based on *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework—Internal Guidance*, United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2019). https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf.

The CFs identify national medium-term strategic priorities that are often found within a long-term vision document (i.e. national development plan or national SDG agenda), and they are increasingly aligned with the SDGs and both regional and subregional development commitments. They guide the entire UN programme cycle, and drive planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda at country level.

The RC plays a stronger leadership role throughout the CF process. The final, approved CF document will be signed by the RC and the Government, as well as participating UN entities. Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will be jointly conducted by the RC and the Government. The lifespan of a CF is three to five years (**Figure 5**), subject to the country's development context and the national development planning cycle.

In summary:

▶ The CF is a UN partnership with the Government for the prioritization, planning, implementation, and reporting of 2030 Agenda actions, in addition to preparation of evidence-based VNRs relying on SDG indicators.

▶ It confirms a commitment to the country's people, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, to help develop national development indicator frameworks in line with the 2030 Agenda and the global indicator framework; address national development needs by including those left behind throughout the CF cycle, across all processes and programmes; and ensure that the people, especially those oft excluded, participate meaningfully in development efforts.

▶ The CF is "a commitment to a broad range of stakeholders"[20] and a vehicle for identifying development solutions through inclusive dialogue. It integrates and contributes to regional, subregional, and cross-border strategies and partnerships, both external and internal to the UNDS, and facilitates South-South and triangular cooperation, complementing official development assistance.

▶ The CF directs all sustainable financing and investments towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, thus moving away from mere "funding" (i.e. resource mobilization for UN programmes) to embrace more comprehensive "SDG financing."

▶ The CF assists the host country in strengthening the resilience of its economy, through appropriate macroeconomic policies, and of its people, through social protection and redistributive policies that reduce vulnerability and retain gains in the struggle against poverty and inequality.

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[20] UN: *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework—Internal Guidance*, United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2019). https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf.

> "The CF is a commitment to a broad range of stakeholders," among whom are "local authorities; legislative, judicial and other independent state oversight bodies; civil society and community organizations; businesses and philanthropic organizations; trade unions and employers' organizations; the scientific and research community; volunteer groups; bi- and multilateral partners, including international financial institutions; and media."
>
> *(source: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework—Internal Guidance, UNSDG, 2019)*

▶ The CF supports peaceful societies through sustainable development strategies tailored to the unique country context. The SDGs at the core of the CF entail the resolution and prevention of conflicts and disasters, responses to climate change, and the promotion of the cohesion and well-being of societies.

▶ Finally, the CF is informed by other key policy, programme, and legal instruments, such as the country reviews conducted through UN human rights mechanisms, the Humanitarian Response Plan, the Refugee Response Plan, and the Integrated Strategic Framework in the setting of UN missions. In protracted crises, the CF reflects "collective outcomes" in light of risks and vulnerabilities.

3.2. CF Guiding Principles

The following principles must be observed throughout CF development and implementation (**Figure 6**):

▶ **Integrated, multidimensional programming**—The CF addresses core programming principles in a holistic, not modular, fashion, throughout the entire process, in line with the five Ps of the 2030 Agenda: people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnerships.

▶ **Leave no one behind**—This is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda, a rights-based framework that represents the commitment of UN member states to eradicating poverty in all its forms, ending discrimination and exclusion, and reducing inequality and vulnerability, which includes effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Among other things, this means shifting attention from the general population to each of its subgroups when evaluating progress.

Figure 6: Components of CF integrated, multidimensional programming approach

- **Human rights**—Enshrined in international law, they include civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, as well as the right to development. A human rights–based approach should be adopted in all development plans, policies, and processes. Such an approach requires that such principles as equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability guide UN development cooperation while augmenting the capacity of "duty-bearers" to meet their obligations and "rights-holders" to assert their rights.

- **Gender equality and women's empowerment**—These are critical for implementing the 2030 Agenda and reaching all SDGs. They should be at the core of CF programming, in accordance with the minimum standards agreed upon by the UNSDG in the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard.[21]

- **Resilience**—This principle is essential to the design of integrated, cost-effective approaches to reduce risks and avoid disasters and rises. Such approaches should be guided by the UN Resilience Framework. Risks include those of human or natural origin, such as violent conflict, epi- and pandemics, financial crises, and fluctuating food prices. Risk is intensified by poverty, climate change, inequality, discrimination, extremism, demographic pressures, lack of urban planning, environmental degradation, ineffectual institutions, and loss of respect for human rights.

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[21] See: https://undg.org/document/unct-swap-gender-eqoality-scorecard. The UNCT System-Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard establishes performance standards for gender-related programme results and institutional measures taken to achieve them.

▶ **Sustainability**—By championing sustainability, we seek to ensure lasting protection of the planet and its natural and cultural resources; inclusive, lasting economic growth; eradication of poverty; and greater human well-being. To these ends, it is essential to strengthen the capacities of national and subnational institutions and communities.

▶ **Accountability**—This entails alignment with national priorities and accountability mechanisms; bolstering national and subnational mechanisms, institutions, and processes for tracking and reporting on progress towards SDGs, including the High-Level Political Forum and VNRs; and enabling inclusive participation of the local community in decision-making throughout the CF cycle.

3.3. CF objectives

The CF has four key objectives:

1. **To articulate a collective UN response for helping countries address national priorities and obstacles along the way to achievement of SDGs**—The CF provides options for reframing economic policies around sustainability for inclusive, diversified, and job-focused economic transformation that advances the rights and well-being of every citizen, strengthens the economy, and preserves our planet.

2. **To embody the spirit of partnerships at the core of the 2030 Agenda**—Partnerships with host governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and bilateral partners give leverage to drive transformative change.

3. **To translate the collective pledge to leave no one behind into concrete action**—UNCTs need to look further than national averages to consider specific data, placing stronger emphasis on inclusion and equality.

4. **To provide UNCTs with the means of adapting responses to the unique contexts of their host countries, ensuring that all entities, remote or in the field, can catalyse national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

3.4. CCA process

▶ This process involves stakeholders through ongoing, inclusive dialogue to address inequality, exclusion, human rights, and other issues. It can build on VNRs; country-specific findings and recommendations of principal UN organs; Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support serving SDG implementation; and the DWCP.

▶ It can integrate analyses of regional, subregional, or cross-border dynamics and their impact on achieving the 2030 Agenda, accounting for trends and risks related to economics, commerce, climate change, natural disasters, environmental damage, conflict, and migration patterns.

▶ The process should examine the country's financial landscape and identify the greatest opportunities for maximizing the financing of sustainable development actions.

▶ The CCA process is not an isolated event. Continuous monitoring of the country's situation is needed so that new developments can inform UN work. This is now a core function carried out by the UNDS at country, regional, and global level.

3.5. CF analytical framework

The primary elements of the CF analytical framework are given below (**Figure 7**).

Figure 7: Main components of analytical framework
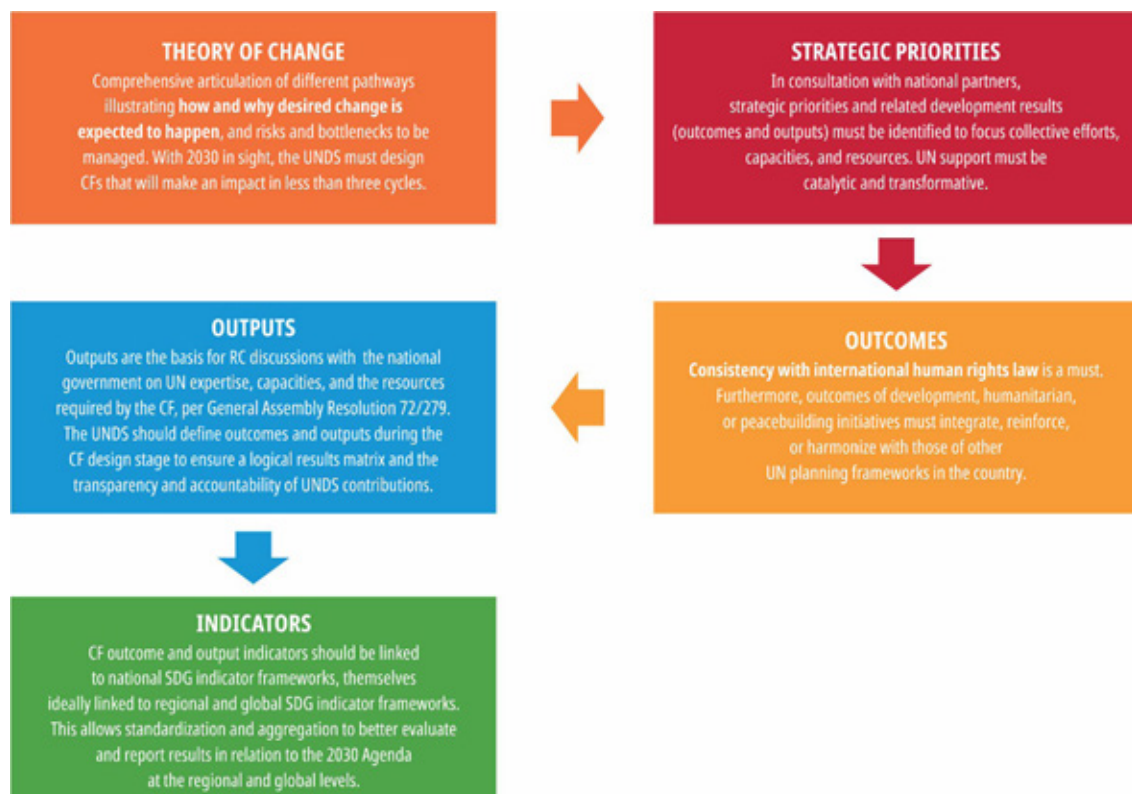
Figure 8: Understanding CF country development landscape—alignment with national development strategy

Prioritization should be informed by annual budgets and expenditure frameworks to identify unfunded or underfunded national development priorities

Preparation of national development plans and frameworks is typically participatory, building on multi-stakeholder consultations and situational analysis.

Priorities are directly derived from UNDS analysis of country needs (national planning and budgetary frameworks).

Completion, review, and validation of CF

The CF is prepared under the leadership of the RC, with feedback collected from the interagency task force and both regional and global platforms, in accordance with the respective Management and Accountability Framework. The UNDS should submit a final draft for feedback from the national government and other key stakeholders and development partners.

3.6. Structuring UNCTs to support CFs

A review of UNCT configuration responds to UN member states' call for a "needs-based tailored country presence".[22] This followed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the "UN development system move away from a somewhat standardized model of physical presence, which largely reflects the historical evolution of each individual entity"[23] to one that ensures "the right system-wide capacities and encourage[s] more integrative, effective and agile ways of working".[24]

A new CF represents a set of expectations of the government matched with a set of undertakings by the UNDS. It usually considers familiar results, unfinished business of the previous CF, and new areas for support. The CF should

Discussion on UNCT configuration should comprise both an internal analysis and consultation with the government and donor partners, answering the following questions:

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[22]   UN: A/RES/72/279, para. 2.

[23]   UN: A/72/684-E/2018/7, para. 38.

[24]   Ibid, p. 41.

- demonstrate a broad, holistic and integrated approach that takes into consideration the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs (see Annex 3);
- strengthen the interlinkages among the three dimensions of sustainable development and all spheres of the UN system's work;
- reflect the interlinkages between the SDGs and the human rights framework, including treaties and human rights monitoring mechanisms;
- build on all sources of data and analysis from a broad range of partners;
- focus on prevention and the interlinkages between sustainable development, human rights, sustaining peace, and the shift from response to preparedness to meet the challenges of the future (see Annex 2).

▶ What kind of expertise and services will the UNCT need to provide to deliver on the CF? From which agencies can these be sourced?

▶ To what extent would these services need to be delivered by an in-country/resident UN agency presence? What aspects could be delivered from a regional or global base?

▶ What new implementation modalities could be leveraged?

▶ To what extent can local service providers deliver some services? Which activities should be delivered directly by UN entities and which by working with implementing partners?

▶ To what extent does the new CF imply a major increase in delivery capacity by one or more members of the UNCT and what would that scaling up require?

After determining the UNCT configuration, the final CF document, together with its legal annex, is signed by the national government and UN development entities. At this point, the CF is not formally required to be accompanied by a budget.

Figure 9: Funding Compact
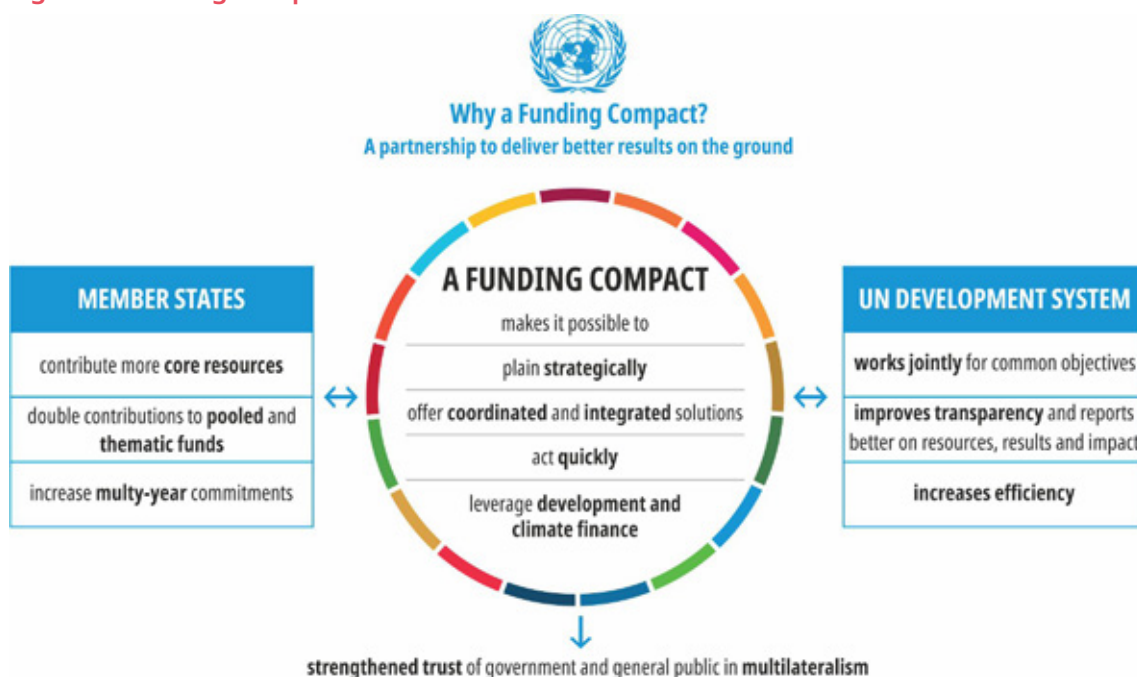
3.7. Linking CF funding to SDGs

The CF presents overall funding needs to achieve prioritized outcomes, identifies available resources, and shows remaining funding gaps. It outlines the strategy for securing needed resources, studying potential sources (e.g. core funding and global, pooled country-level, or thematic agency-specific UNDS resources). The funding framework is operationalized annually as part of UN joint work plans.

In 2017, the Funding Compact between member states and the UNDS to improve predictability, flexibility, and overall quality was created.[25]

The UNDS should seek to leverage different sources of financing and investment flows outside the UN system that support governments in financing national priorities aimed at achievement of SDGs. It should explore ways to connect more strongly with domestic financing, such as by engaging with and influencing national budget processes, decisions, and priorities, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Beyond the UN's own funding framework, the UNCT should:

▶ map and analyse the financing landscape for the SDGs and outline how to maximize impact through smart investment of existing resources, greater access to additional resources, and better leveraging of larger financial flows

**Figure 10: Sources of financing for CF implementation**
(source: UNSDG, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guide, 2019)

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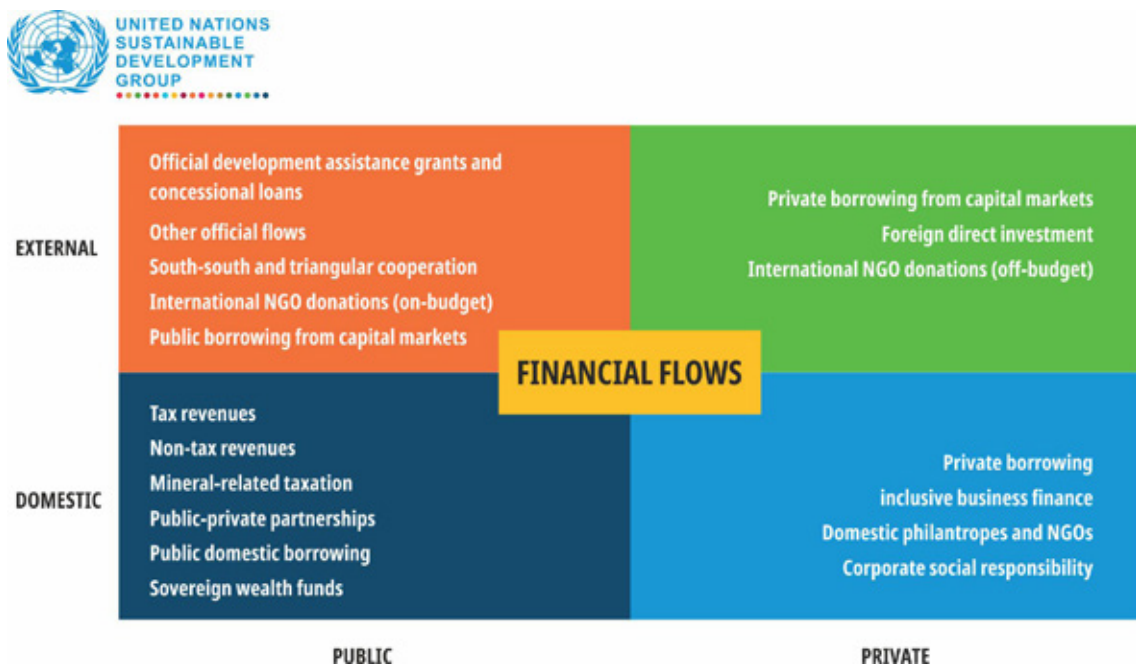
25   UN: *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system*, Report of the Secretary-General, Apr 2019, A/74/73/Add.3–E/2019/14/Add.3.

▶ build on existing data on financial flows as provided by the international financial institutions, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and others, as well as the Integrated National Financing Framework, to the extent possible

▶ articulate necessary partnerships among UN development entities and between them and external stakeholders, such as the international financial institutions and the private sector

▶ identify (a) priority SDGs within the country; (b) the approximate amount of financing needed to achieve each SDG; (c) domestic, international, public, and private financing flows, and relevant stakeholders; and (d) instruments and modalities through which UNDS resources can be paired with other financial flows, which might include, depending on CF outcomes, a national "window" in a UN fund or programme designed and implemented as a first tranche within the context of a larger sectoral programme that draws on non-UN funding

▶ identify financing opportunities that reduce inequalities and exclusion, such as those aimed at supporting the poorest areas of a country (**Figures 10 and 11**)

Figure 11: CF financing and funding strategy
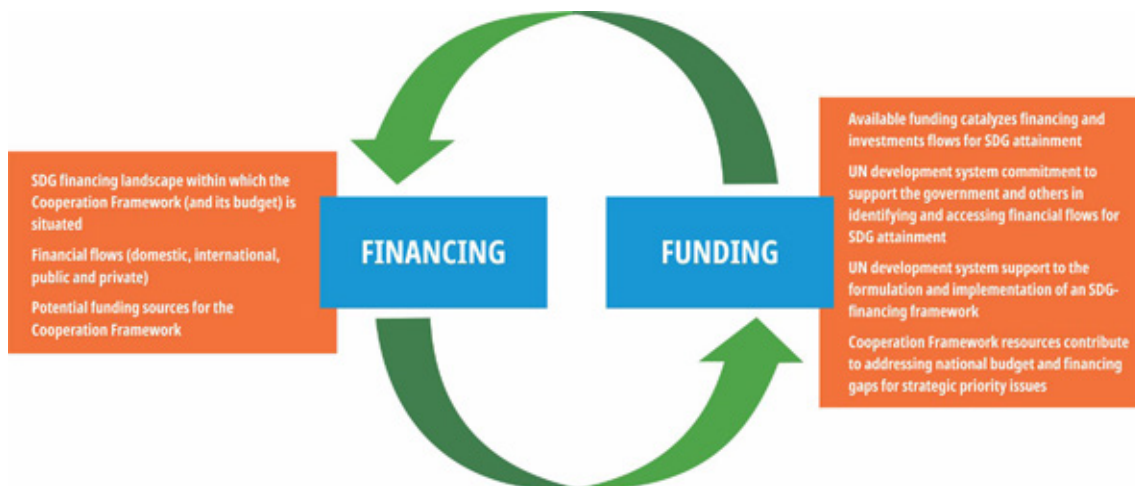
3.8. CF implementation: joint plans, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation

SDG targets and indicators become the default monitoring framework, informed by country-defined and disaggregated baselines. The CF is implemented through the UNDS entity instruments for country development programming, according to one of the following options:

▶ **Option A**—UNDS entities adopt the CF as their own country development programme document; they do not prepare a separate entity document.

▶ **Option B**—UNDS entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with CF outcomes copied verbatim.

▶ **Option C**—UNDS entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with CF outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional outcomes that are not in the CF, included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities not prioritized in the CF.

In line with General Assembly Resolution 72/279 and the Management and Accountability Framework, the RC coordinates CF implementation and works with UNCT members to align UNDS entity development programmes with the CF and the 2030 Agenda and to prepare joint plans.

Monitoring and learning are necessary for evaluating how the CF is contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, keeping abreast of the latest risks and opportunities, and adjusting the programme as part of adaptive management.

The endpoint of one CF cycle is the starting point for another, and the **CCA constitutes the baseline** for CF monitoring and evaluation. The RC should submit a One UN Country Results Report to the host government and key partners at least once a year. This can feed into government thematic/sector reports **as well as VNRs at the High-Level Political Forum**.

**Joint monitoring throughout the CF cycle** should ensure that the UNDS is

▶ **delivering** on the commitment to leave no one behind, and achieving results that uphold the CF Guiding Principles

▶ **helping** national partners develop capacities

▶ **mitigating** drivers of conflict, disaster risks, humanitarian crises, and complex emergencies, including through greater cooperation and complementarity among activities related to development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, and preservation of peace

▶ **fostering** new and effective partnerships between national stakeholders and international players, including through South-South and triangular cooperation

▶ **promoting** integrated and coherent policy support

Nationally owned CF governance mechanisms could involve the National/UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC):

▶ The JSC is cochaired by the RC and the most senior representative of the central government entity acting as the UN system's counterpart, and its membership includes key partners identified in the CF for joint contributions to national priorities and the 2030 Agenda.

▶ It ensures strategic direction and oversight for the CF; alignment with national, regional, and international development processes, mechanisms, and goals; and linkage with other processes, such as the VNRs.

▶ The committee monitors progress, challenges, and opportunities; steers implementation; reviews the One UN Country Results Report; and supports resource mobilization for the CF as well as development financing opportunities.

▶ The JSC review takes place at least once a year. It is an opportunity to amend the CF so that it remains relevant in the face of changing national circumstances.

The UNDS and JSC may decide to have advisory committees (e.g. civil society, youth, or private sector committee) support them in their work.

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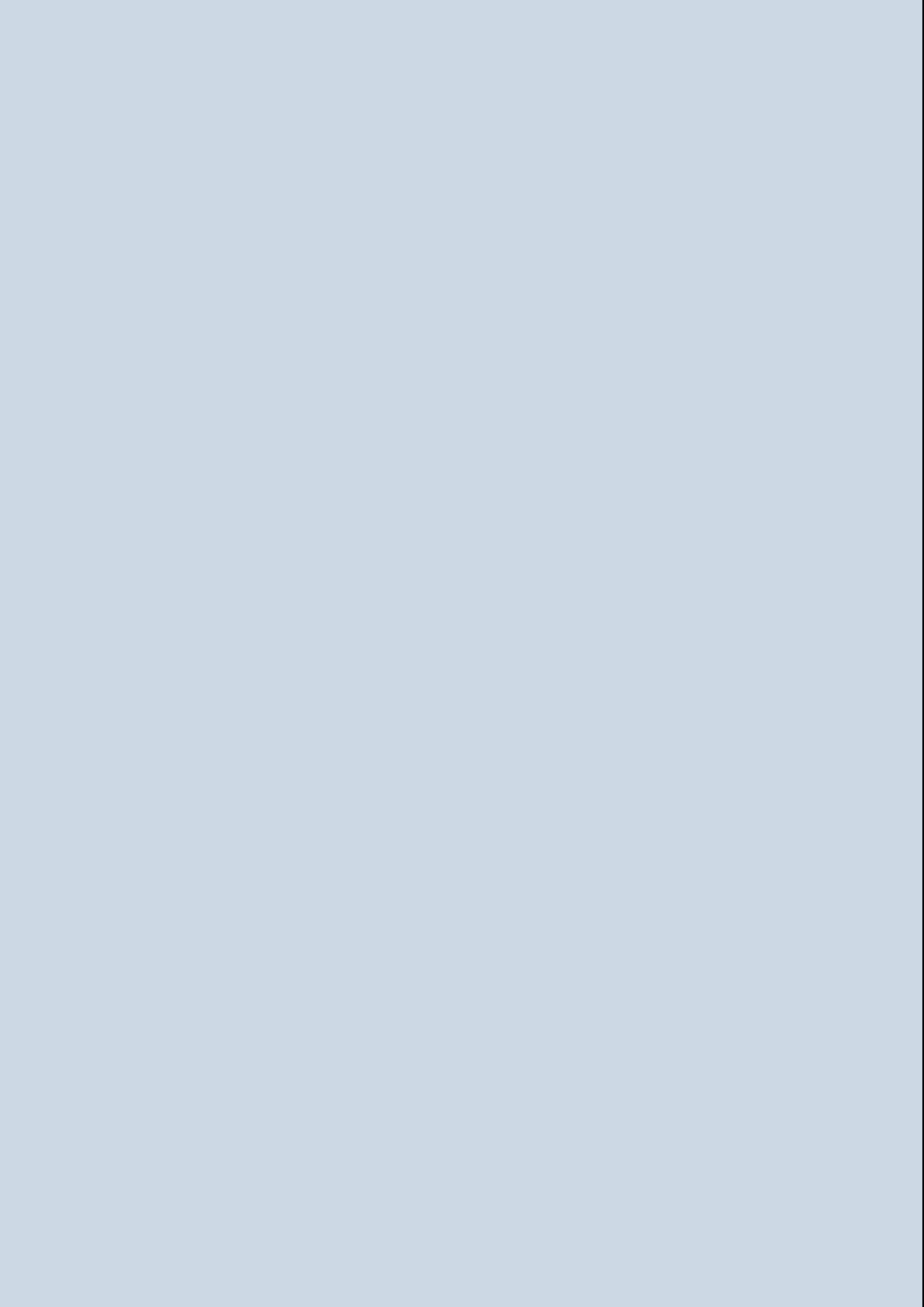
SECTION 4

Promoting synergy between DWCPs and CFs

Section 4:

Promoting synergy between DWCPs and CFs

The previous sections explained how the UNDS has been reformed and transformed to deliver and accelerate progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs. CFs have become the primary means of coordinating major UNDS responses and contributions at the country level to advance towards SDGs while leaving no one behind. In this section, we will consider the role of the DWCP in light of the CF.

4.1. Connecting DWCPs to CFs for 2030 Agenda implementation

The 2030 Agenda is universal, rights-based and integrated, based on the recognition that the three dimensions—economic, environmental and social—must be pursed in an integrated manner, with greater policy coherence and through multi-stakeholders partnerships.

In this context, the new UN Cooperation Framework/UNDAF guidance places special emphasis on moving towards integrated programming approaches that bring together the development, humanitarian, human rights, and peace and security pillars.[26]

The new approach also requires UN agencies like the ILO to derive their specific country programmes from CFs, to avoid "siloed" work and ensure more integrated UN responses for fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

In 2004, the ILO introduced time-bound and resourced country programmes called Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). DWCPs are governance instruments designed by the ILO's tripartite constituents with the support of the Office and the primary means through which the ILO helps its members advance towards the goal of decent work for women and men in countries around the world. They are based on ILO principles and standards, the priorities of the ILO's constituents, and national development objectives. DWCPs reflect ILO constituents' commitment to pursue strategic ILO objectives at the national level in a cooperative and coordinated manner.
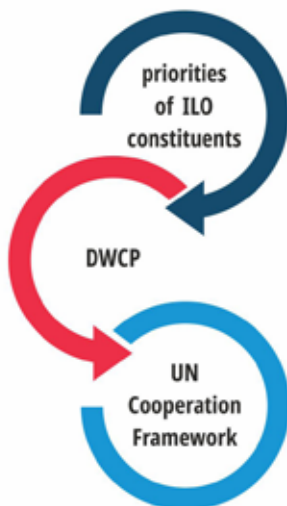
Figure 12: DWCP—main accountability framework for ILO

In the context of the CF, the DWCP will remain the main accountability framework between the ILO Office and the ILO constituents at country level, and the basis for ILO resource mobilization in accordance with the CF guidance document (**Figure 12**).

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26 ILO: *ILO Decent Work Country Programme: a practical guidebook, Version 4* (Geneva, 2016). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561025.pdf.

4.2. DWCP approach to country programming

The Decent Work Agenda—whose four strategic objectives are employment, social protection, social dialogue, and rights at work—provides the overarching framework for ILO programming, including at the country level.

As the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization underscores, the four strategic objectives are interrelated, inseparable, and mutually reinforcing. Their integrated pursuit at the national level depends on ILO support and consistency between diverse policies.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the preparation and implementation of DWCPs enter a new phase in which ILO action will need to be a visible part of the overall UN effort.

The Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work,[27] adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2016, calls upon the ILO, amongst other things, to:

▶ "Ensure that all Decent Work Country Programmes comprise integrated and balanced strategies to promote all the strategic objectives and the crosscutting issues in a set of

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[27] ILO: Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work, International Labour Conference, 105th Session, Geneva, 2016. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_497583.pdf.

priorities identified by national tripartite constituents; contain measurable, realistic and achievable outcomes; and should have tripartite steering committees or similar fora to ensure ownership and increase impact."

▶ "Support Members to better align Decent Work Country Programmes with national and, where appropriate, regional sustainable development strategies that integrate the 2030 Agenda and its decent work components, as well as with United Nations planning frameworks at the country or, where appropriate, regional level."

The revised ILO DWCP guidebook[28] takes its cue from the ILO Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work and the UNDAF (CF) guidance document, as updated following adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

4.3. DWCPs as vector of UN activity at country level

DWCPs also aim to achieve social justice through decent work and are effective vehicles for implementing the 2030 Agenda in connection with the CF. During its High-Level Section meeting in March 2018, the ILO Governing Body examined this issue in the context of the UN reforms and their implications for the ILO. Meeting participants expressed strong support for the need to strengthen the quality of DWCPs and their linkages with CF/UNDAFs, while safeguarding the tripartism, normative activities, and supervisory system of the ILO.[29]

In other words, DWCPs remain the main accountability framework used by the ILO Office and ILO constituents at country level. The ILO Office should aim to help ILO constituents:

▶ maximize opportunities ILO social partners to influence the CF processes

▶ effectively use a solid and through decent work diagnostic as an input to the CCA and CF processes

▶ illustrate how DWCP priorities and outcomes contribute directly to the CF as effective vehicles for achieving decent work results within the purview of the 2030 Agenda

▶ prepare substantive revisions of the DWCP and CF guidance documents, ensuring that the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda are covered

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[28] ILO: *ILO Decent Work Country Programme: a practical guidebook*, Version 4 (Geneva, 2016). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561025.pdf.

[29] ILO: *Reform of the United Nations: implications for the ILO*, Governing Body, 332nd Session, Geneva, Mar 2018, GB.332/HL/1, para. 14. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_618112.pdf.
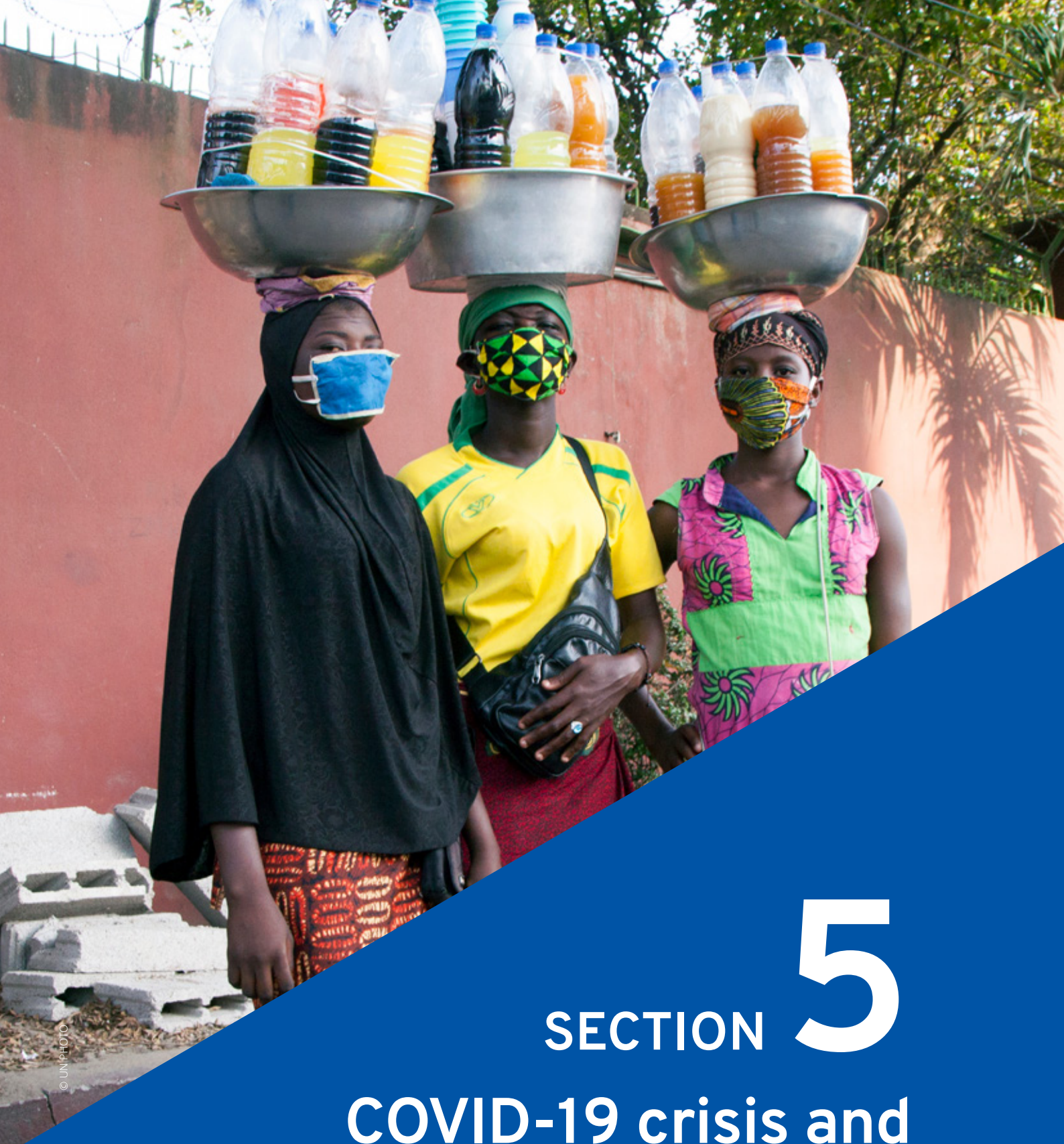
SECTION **5**

COVID-19 crisis and 2030 Agenda

Section 5:

COVID-19 crisis and 2030 Agenda

5.1. Implications of COVID-19 crisis for achievement of SDGs

According to the 2020 SDG Report,[30] the world had been making progress—albeit uneven and insufficient for meeting SDGs—in areas such as maternal and child health, access to electricity, and women's representation in government. Yet these advances were offset elsewhere by growing food insecurity, deterioration of the natural environment, and persistent and pervasive inequalities.

However, with the onset of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020, the pandemic quickly became the worst human and economic crisis in the present generation's living memory, spreading to all countries, with the global death toll exceeding 500,000 and the number of confirmed cases rising to over 10 million in less than six months.[31] This led to an unpreceded health, economic, and social crisis, making achievement of SDGs even more challenging.

The UN's 2020 SDG Report captures the following key findings in relation to the influence of COVID-19 on the achievement of 2030 Agenda SDGs:

▶ Approximately 71 million people will have been pushed back into extreme poverty in 2020, the first rise in global poverty since 1998.

▶ Underemployment and unemployment prompted by the crisis mean that about 1.6 billion already vulnerable workers in the informal economy, constituting half of the global workforce, have been affected.

▶ More than one billion slum dwellers worldwide are acutely at risk from the effects of COVID-19, suffering from a lack of adequate housing and related social services.

▶ Women and children are among those bearing the brunt of the pandemic's effects, due to disruption to health and vaccination services and limited access to diet and nutrition services, which may result in hundreds of thousands of additional under-5 deaths and tens of thousands of additional maternal deaths in 2020. There has also been a surge in reports of domestic violence against women and children.

▶ As more families fall into extreme poverty, children in poor and disadvantaged communities are at much greater risk of child labour, child marriage, and child trafficking. In fact, the global gains in reducing child labour are likely to be reversed for the first time in 20 years.

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30 UN: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs [accessed 11 Sep 2020].

31 Ibid.

According to the 5th ILO Monitor,[32] there was a 14 per cent drop in global working hours during the second quarter of 2020, equivalent to the loss of 400 million full-time jobs.

Altogether, the COVID-19 pandemic is linked to slowed progress towards achievement of SDGs, largely due to associated funding constraints, implementation uncertainties, and worldwide economic stress. This underscores the need for a more coordinated multilateral response, increased funding, and adoption of policies aimed at achieving social justice and a future of work that puts people first.

5.2. UN Framework for the Immediate Response to COVID-19[33]

As a policy response to COVID-19, the UN has developed a framework to provide urgent socioeconomic support to countries and societies severely affected by the crisis, in line with the UN Secretary-General's report—*Shared responsibility, global solidarity[34]*—on the same subject. The framework has five pillars, detailed below, and constitutes an integrated UNDS support package for protecting the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic, focusing especially on the countries, groups, and people at greatest risk of being left behind.

Five pillars of the UN Framework Response:

1. **Ensuring essential health services** remain available
2. **Helping people cope with adversity**, through social protection and basic services
3. **Protecting jobs**, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises as well as informal workers, through economic response and recovery programmes
4. Guiding the necessary surge in fiscal and financial stimuli to make **macroeconomic policies work** for the most vulnerable, and strengthening multilateral and regional responses
5. Promoting **social cohesion** and investing in community-led resilience and response systems

The five pillars are interwoven with a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and gender equality, in order to build back better.

Guiding principles of the UN Framework Response: To ensure a development response of unprecedented speed, four principles guide associated UN actions:

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[32] ILO: *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work*, fifth edition (2020). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf.

[33] This subsection is based on the *UN Framework for the Immediate Response to COVID*, Apr 2020. https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19 [accessed 11 Sep 2020].

[34] UN: *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, Mar 2020. https://unsdg.un.org/resources/shared-responsibility-global-solidarity-responding-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19.

1. **Transaction costs must be minimized** by using existing platforms, capacities, institutions, and systems
2. **Flexibility must be enhanced**, by drawing on programming and operational approaches usually reserved for responses to high-risk situations, conflict, or humanitarian crises
3. **Risks must be taken, but managed**, by making full use of shared as well as entity-specific risk management tools and by more rapidly sharing information on what works and what doesn't, at all levels
4. **Coherence and discipline must be everyone's focus**, by working with and through collective initiatives and frameworks, including in matters of resource mobilization

Delivery of UN Framework Response: The heart of the response lies at the national and subnational level, using existing structures. It is undertaken under RC leadership, with support from the UN Development Programme as technical lead, and UNCT members working as one on all facets of the response.

RCs, in their supplementary role as Humanitarian Coordinators, will ensure coherence between this response and humanitarian interventions—as well as with the health response, under the technical lead of WHO.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator, together with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, coordinates and supports partners in the delivery of the humanitarian response and also provides leadership and guidance to the Humanitarian Coordinator (RC) on matters relating to humanitarian assistance. As per the Global Compact on Refugees and existing Inter-Agency Standing Committee protocols, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees will assist national authorities with coordination of the refugee response. **Figure 13** illustrates how the COVID-19 response is to be organized at country level.
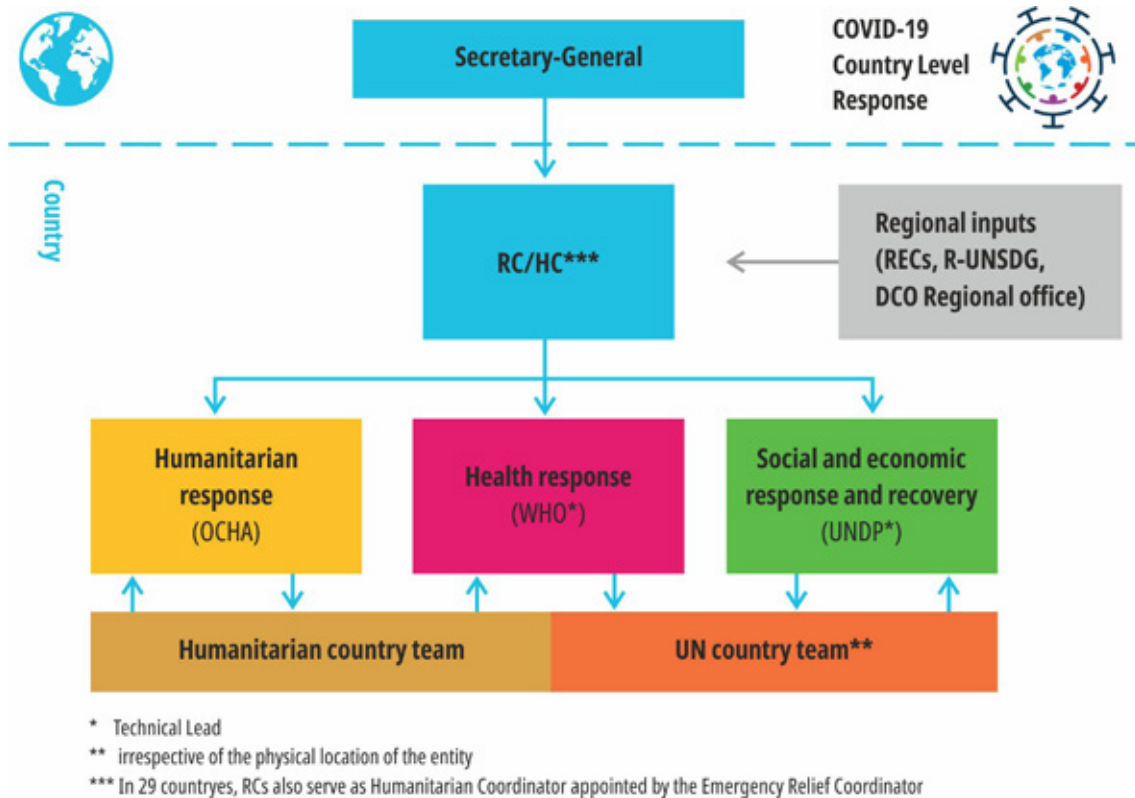
Each UNCT will quickly elaborate its COVID-19 response with reference to the UN Framework Response's five pillars. The country response should include

▶ a rapid assessment of the situation, considering gender inequality and risks to the most vulnerable

▶ the UNCT's COVID-19 programmatic portfolio, with gaps identified as needed to inform the use of relevant funding instruments

▶ the UNCT's COVID-19 nonprogrammatic support to countries (e.g. analysis, policy advice, communication, and messaging)

▶ engagement with international financial institutions and other key partners, for coherent policy advice and proper resource mobilization

Figure 13: COVID-19 country-level response
(source: https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19)

* Technical Lead
** irrespective of the physical location of the entity
*** In 29 countryes, RCs also serve as Humanitarian Coordinator appointed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator

Funding of the UN Framework Response: UNCTs will first and foremost seek to repurpose existing budgets for interventions that can be adapted to support the socioeconomic response. This is to be done in consultation with the national government. A significant proportion of the existing UN development portfolio—totalling US$17.8 billion for all 17 SDGs combined—will be adjusted and expanded for this purpose. However, the magnitude of the crisis will require a large volume of additional resources.

The WHO's global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan sets out the key priorities for the health response across the world. The initial plan called for $675 million, but this amount will rise substantially. The plan is the reference for establishing priority actions and financing needs for the health response. Health interventions will be financed through multiple channels, the main sources being national governments' budgets, the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

The COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, launched by the Secretary-General and coordinated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners, sets out the key priorities for the humanitarian response. Initially costed at $2 billion, the plan will be reviewed periodically as needs become more apparent. The Global Humanitarian Response Plan is the primary vehicle for raising resources to meet immediate COVID-19–related health and multisectoral needs in 40 to 50

priority countries, including the health response identified in WHO's global plan. **Figure 14** shows funding paths under the UN Framework Response for COVID-19.

Figure 14: COVID-19—UN response and recovery financing models
(source: https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19)
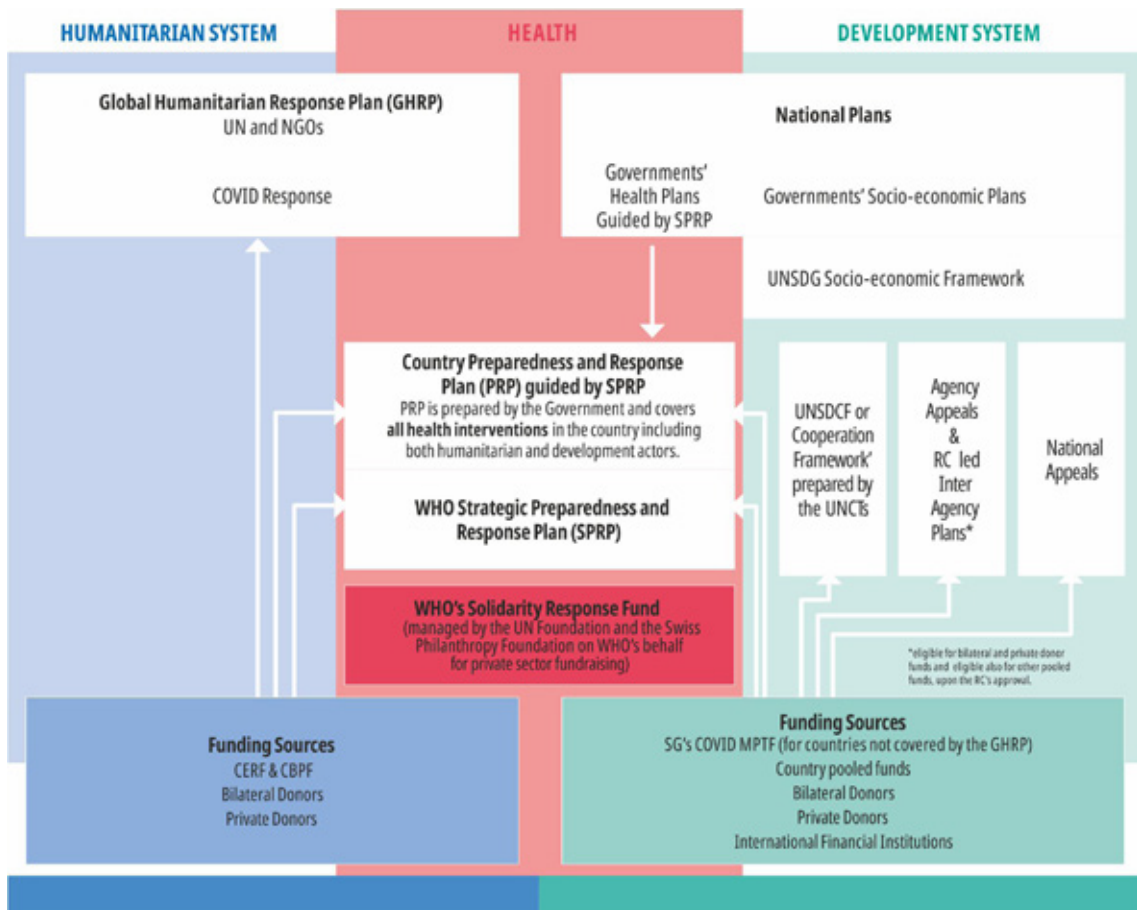
In a significant number of other countries where the scale of the humanitarian impact of COVID-19 remains limited, RCs and UNCTs will be entrusted with the humanitarian response. These arrangements will all be calibrated country-by-country under the local leadership of the RC or HC, working with UNCTs and Humanitarian Country Teams. The humanitarian response will reflect the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and updated as needed based on changing humanitarian needs.

The UNDS socioeconomic response outlined in this framework, is expected to be financed through multiple avenues. These include the **Secretary-General's new COVID-19 Response**

and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, intended to manage resources for multiagency/ joint programming responses; agency-specific resource mobilization efforts organized around agency appeals or trust fund initiatives; government-sponsored country-level appeals (as we have seen for Bangladesh and Niger); and UNCT-sponsored country-level pooled funds. Existing funding instruments like the Joint SDG Fund, the Peacebuilding Fund, the Spotlight Initiative, and vertical funds such as Gavi are also potential funding sources and partners for joint or complementary programming in this area.

Finally, the UNDS may also help coordinate the financing of government priorities by international financial institutions. While multiple sources will need to be used, resource mobilization efforts at country level will be part of a joint process under RC leadership, and data on these funds will be disseminated through the UNCT's collective reporting platforms.

5.3. ILO policy framework addressing economic and social impact of COVID19[35]

The ILO has structured its key policy messages for a socioeconomic response to the crisis around four pillars, based on international labour standards:

▶ **Pillar 1: Stimulating the economy and employment**—stressing the need for active fiscal policy, accommodative monetary policy, lending, and financial support to specific sectors, including the health sector

▶ **Pillar 2: Supporting enterprises, jobs, and incomes**—underscoring the need for extending social protection to all; implementing employment retention measures; and providing financial, tax, and other relief measures for businesses

▶ **Pillar 3: Protecting workers in the workplace**—urging strengthened occupational safety and health measures, adapting work arrangements (e.g. teleworking), preventing discrimination and exclusion, allowing all to benefit from health services, and widening access to paid leave

▶ **Pillar 4: Relying on social dialogue for solutions**—putting social dialogue at the heart of policy-making during the crisis; increasing the resilience of employers' and workers' organizations; boosting their capacity and that of governments; and strengthening collective bargaining, labour relations institutions, and related processes

The ILO's four-pillar policy framework provides guidance not only for countries, as they progress through the various phases of the crisis, but also for the international community as a whole. It is anchored in the following values and convictions:

▶ A global **human-centred** response grounded in **solidarity** is necessary.

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35 *This subsection is based on A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 Crisis* (2020). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745337.pdf.

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▶ **International labour standards** are of primary importance for advancing the Decent Work Agenda even in the unparalleled context of the COVID-19 crisis. The **Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)** emphasizes that crisis responses need to "ensure respect for all human rights and the rule of law, including respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and for international labour standards".

▶ Those standards dealing with safety and health at work, social security, employment, non-discrimination, working arrangements, and the protection of specific categories of workers provide **guidance on the design of rapid responses** that can facilitate a stronger recovery from the crisis.

▶ **A coordinated global effort** is required to support countries that currently do not have sufficient fiscal space to finance social policy, especially universal social protection. Debt sustainability should be prioritized as part of this effort.

▶ Without **long-term structural changes**, the deep-rooted inequalities exposed by the crisis will merely intensify. As well as tackling the immediate effects of the crisis, the international community now has a unique opportunity to adopt policies aimed at achieving social justice and a human-centred future of work.

5.4. Role of Workers' organizations in COVID-19 crisis response and 2030 Agenda[36]

The most immediate and severe components of this crisis may end soon, but its consequences, for people, economies and our planet, will be with us for a long time. There will be a need for a strategic rebuilding of social and economic systems, including restoring the confidence of citizens, especially the most vulnerable, in those structures ability to deliver [i.e., to build back better]. However, this is only likely to be possible with a multilateral approach, based on the principles of social justice and solidarity that leave no one behind!—Maria Helena André, Director, ACTRAV[37]

Everything we do during and after this crisis [COVID-19] must be with a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change, and the many other global challenges we face.—UN Secretary-General António Guterres [38]

Now—and after COVID-19—we need more responsive trade union organizations, with strong political and technical expertise to embrace the global development 2030 Agenda and shape its implementation at all levels. Accordingly, trade unions must

▶ contact RCs and UNCTs to offer solutions from a trade union perspective

▶ work through CFs to demand alignment of national socioeconomic policies and strategies, from CCA development to postcrisis recovery

▶ use CFs to help their governments make critical socioeconomic and environmental policy decisions—for example, to save jobs without risking workers' health

▶ employ existing social dialogue mechanisms to reach tripartite consensus on critical issues of mutual importance

▶ underscore the importance of international labour standards and fundamental rights at work as a strong foundation for the development and implementation of measures to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 at national level

▶ uphold DWCPs as effective instruments for addressing the effects of the crisis on employment and labour issues

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[36] *MH André: Multilateralism, SDGs and COVID-19: What role for workers' organisations?* (ILO, 2020). https://www.ilo.org/actrav/media-center/news/WCMS_742143/lang--en/index.htm.

[37] MH André: COVID shows why we need multilateralism more than ever (2020). https://iloblog.org/2020/05/08/covid-19-shows-why-we-need-multilateralism-more-than-ever/.

[38] *A Guterres: The recovery from the COVID crisis must lead to a different economy* (2020). https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/launch-report-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19.

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