

## **UNDG Strategic Priorities for 2013-2016**

The United Nations Development Group unites the [32 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments, and offices](#) that play a role in development in over 150 countries. Our common objective is to deliver more coherent, effective and efficient support to countries seeking to attain internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In response to the UN General Assembly's quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of UN operational activities for development, the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda and the evolving international development and cooperation environment, the UNDG has agreed on a set of common Strategic Priorities for 2013-2016.

The UNDG Strategic Priorities give direction to UNDG efforts at the global, regional and country level to facilitate a step change in the quality and impact of UN support at the country level.

### **The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)**

On 21 December 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted the landmark resolution (A/Res/67/226) on the QCPR, which assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development and establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system for the period 2013-2016.

The QCPR sends a clear message: Member States would like to see a strong UN development system which is strategically relevant, nimble, and ready and able to help deliver sustainable development results.

The resolution reaffirms the eradication of poverty as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The QCPR emphasizes that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and stresses the need for strengthening normative and operational linkages within the United Nations system, directing particular efforts to building national capacity for inclusive, equitable, participatory, transparent and accountable national development processes, to target and empower the poor and people in vulnerable situations. Member States underline the need for accelerating sustainable, broad-based, inclusive and equitable economic growth for the benefit of all people and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Member States emphasize the need for a more strategic and coherent results culture across the entire UN development system and call for strengthened system-wide coherence and effectiveness at the country level. The QCPR underlines the importance of improving the effectiveness of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system and, for the first time, there is intergovernmental recognition of the Delivering as One model. The UN development system is called upon to further strengthen joint programming processes, improve the UNDAF as a strategic framework and simplify the UNDAF process, simplify and harmonize agency-specific programming instruments, and consolidate a host of support services at the regional and country levels.

At the regional level, the UN development system is requested to strengthen collaboration with regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organizations and regional development banks in support of country development work. At the global level, the UN development system is requested to invest in intra-agency rationalization of business operations, and further harmonization of rules, policies and procedures in the areas of finance, human resources, procurement, ICT and other administrative services.

The resolution reiterates the importance of fulfilling ODA commitments and the centrality of core resources for UN operational activities for development. At the same time, the QCPR underlines the need to improve the quality of non-core resources that are more predictable, flexible, less earmarked and better aligned with national priorities.

### **UNDG Strategic Priorities 2013-2016**

The UNDG recognizes the need to tailor its support to the specific challenges faced by programme countries. Since there is no "one size fits all" approach to development, development assistance by the UN development system must respond to the varying needs of programme countries – least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, low- and middle income countries, as well as the special needs of Africa.

The UNDG Strategic Priorities 2013-2016 intend to maximize the collective impact of the UN development system in delivering effective support to countries through nationally-led and owned development processes:

#### **I. Overarching Goal**

**Deliver effective support to countries for sustainable, equitable and accountable development under national ownership and leadership.**

#### **II. Strategic Priorities**

- 1) MDG/IADG Achievement:** The UNDG will focus on delivering effective support for accelerating sustainable, broad-based, inclusive and equitable achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) and treaty obligations. Highest priority will be assigned to poverty eradication and scaling up efforts to address the root causes of extreme poverty and hunger as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, with emphasis on the most vulnerable and marginalized. The UNDG will increase investment in and focus on results related to gender equality and the empowerment of women as an essential prerequisite for reaching the MDGs/IADGs.
- 2) Post-2015 Agenda:** The UNDG will facilitate broad-based engagement in the global dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda building on the experience of the MDGs and core UN values of human rights, equality and sustainability, linking to national development priorities and strategies as well as regionally-led initiatives.

- 3) **Crisis/Post-Crisis Transition:** The UNDG will promote the integration approach by ensuring mutually reinforcing linkages between the political, development, humanitarian, rule of law, human rights and social and security dimensions of UN engagement so as to help build resilient societies and deliver effective support for sustainable recovery in crisis and post-crisis countries.
- 4) **National Capacity Development and Development Effectiveness:** The UNDG will strengthen its focus on providing coherent support to and ensuring sustainability of national capacity development, including through providing “upstream” policy and programme advice, using national systems, and sharing of good practices and lessons learned and strengthening normative and operational linkages, particularly through further promoting a human rights-based approach to achieve sustainable development. Emphasis will be placed on the effective integration of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development in national capacity development.

### III. Strategic Approaches

To ensure the United Nations development system delivers relevant, coherent, efficient and effective high-quality support to a diverse range of developing countries, the UNDG will use the following strategic approaches to accelerate system-coherence:

- 1) **Promote a strategic and coherent results culture across the entire UN development system:** Based on clear and robust results frameworks, which demonstrate results chains, strengthening joint programming processes, including through Delivering as One for countries that choose to adopt the approach. Ensure that Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams support national development and poverty reduction strategies and are accountable for monitoring and reporting of results to national authorities, using national systems and improved common instruments and tools such as the MDG Acceleration Framework and the Monitoring Results for Equity System for feeding these results into planning, monitoring and reporting processes. UNDG member entities will increase agency incentives and support for coherence, quality assurance, and results. Together with Member States, promote joint funding approaches, including through better budgetary planning with Common Budgetary Frameworks, strengthening and rationalizing joint funding mechanisms and joint resource mobilization; support extension of these joint funding approaches, when appropriate, for the advancement of Delivering as One, and translate good practices on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, HIV, environmental sustainability, and gender equality into instruments designed to support implementation.
- 2) **Ensure the functioning of the RC system as participatory, collegial and mutually accountable:** Implement and monitor the Management and Accountability System; promote a better division of labour within the UN development system at the country level under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator; ensure the UN system has the right mix of capacities and skills, including for high-quality policy and programme advice relevant to the specific country context; tailor UN country presence and programmes to country needs and ensure that programme countries have access to and benefit from the full range of mandates and resources of the UN development system, including non-resident agencies and the particular normative support work and policy

expertise that exists at the regional level; improve selection, training, appraisal and retention of individuals within the RC system; ensure that profiles of Resident Coordinators are aligned with the needs, priorities and challenges of programme countries; ensure the appropriate decentralization of authority from headquarters and regional levels to country-level representatives; enhance the planning and coordination function of RCs; ensure that Resident Coordinators provide formal input to the regular performance appraisals of agency representatives on UN Country Teams; improve system capacity to deploy knowledge and know-how; and provide further financial, technical, and organizational support to the RC system, including strengthening the capacity of Resident Coordinator offices. Ensure predictable and sustained funding for a cost-effective RC system based on system-wide cost-sharing by all UNDG member entities.

- 3) Accelerate simplification and harmonization of business practices:** Make programmes and operations more efficient, cost-effective, and transparent by reducing duplication, and administrative and transaction costs, including through consolidation of common support services at the country and regional level where cost-effective; employ joint funding tools and mechanisms when there is a strategic advantage following a cost-benefit analysis; develop a strategy to support the establishment of cost-effective common premises in programme countries that wish to adopt them; accelerate progress in deepening coordination with Secretariat entities; and further simplification and harmonization of rules, policies and procedures in the functional areas of finance, human resources, procurement, ICT and other administrative services. UNDG's efforts will be geared towards ensuring maximum efficiency and effectiveness in terms of resource use. Concurrently, UNDG member entities will further invest in rationalizing their business operations.
- 4) Foster effective partnerships:** Mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in UN programming; strengthen operational partnerships with other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions; strengthen cooperation and coordination among regional entities; support enabling environments at the country-level for cooperation between Governments, the UN, development partners, civil society, NGOs, the academia and the private sector; identify and work with partners who can best help to further sustainable, broad-based, inclusive and equitable development at country level, including smallholders and cooperatives; strengthen normative and operational linkages and ensure coherence across all pillars of the UN system and within the CEB; strengthen cooperation and coordination among development activities, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts; and engage with Member States to improve the quantity of core and the quality of non-core funding.

#### IV. Strategic Entry Points

While the UNDG Strategic Priorities seek to ensure that the UN development system delivers more coherent, effective and efficient support to all programme countries in line with its worldwide mandate and presence, the UNDG has identified Delivering as One / UNDAF roll-out and crisis/post-crisis transition countries as strategic entry points for introducing the next generation of reform instruments:

- 1) Delivering as One / UNDAF roll-out:** Over the next four years, the UN development system will strategically reposition itself in the majority of programme countries by developing new UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAs). The UNDG will seize this opportunity to encourage countries to adopt the Delivering as One approach based on Standard Operating Procedures and to improve the UNDAF as a strategic framework in all countries.

The next generation of UNDAFs will promote a better division of labour with lighter, more flexible working arrangements focused on delivering and measuring results to respond coherently to national priorities, challenges and needs. Financial information will be consolidated in common budgetary frameworks and the UNDG will simplify the UNDAF process and timeframe in order to reduce the workload of stakeholders and improve focus on results. Likewise, UNDG member entities will further simplify and harmonize agency-specific programming instruments and processes in alignment with the UNDAF.

The UNDG will support countries that choose to adopt a Delivering as One approach with an integrated package of support based on Standard Operating Procedures, which will enable UN Country Teams to fully and successfully implement the Delivering as One approach under national leadership. The second generation of Delivering as One and improved UNDAFs will be firmly focused on results, accountability and reduced transaction costs, including through complementary reform measures at the corporate level.

- 2) Crisis/post-crisis transition:** In crisis and post-crisis countries, the UNDG will provide coherent support to sustainable recovery through enhanced coordination among operational activities for development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts of the UN system, in accordance with agencies' respective mandates, and incorporation of needs and specificities of these countries in their development processes and programmes. This will include an emphasis on building resilience by developing systems and capacities to reduce risks and vulnerabilities. The UNDG will also pursue enhanced coherence and coordination of UN funding instruments.

## Operationalizing the UNDG Strategic Priorities

The UNDG Strategic Priorities 2013-2016 will be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the other two pillars of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) – the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) – so as to ensure maximum coherence among the priorities, strategies and work plans of the UNDG, HLCP and HLCM.

The UNDG Strategic Priorities will be reviewed in 2015 and adjusted as necessary in light of the new post-2015 development framework. The UNDG will report on implementation of the Strategic Priorities and assess their impact by the end of 2016.

The UNDG Strategic Priorities are operationalized through two biannual UNDG work plans for achieving country-, regional- and system-level priorities, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, targets and timelines. The first UNDG work plan covers the period 2013-2014.

In accordance with the Management and Accountability System, the UNDG Strategic Priorities are implemented by the UNDG Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG Teams, Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) and UNDG member entities. The UNDG will identify and regularly review appropriate working-level mechanisms to support the implementation of the strategic priorities in the most effective way.

**The UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO):** The UN Development Operations Coordination Office has been independently reviewed and functionally realigned to ensure the required support to the United Nations development system. DOCO performs three critical functions for the UNDG and the Resident Coordinator system: (i) focused policy coordination and technical support to the global work of the UNDG; (ii) support to the Regional UNDG Teams and Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams; and (iii) gathering evidence and data as to what is happening in programme countries to feed into UNDG analytical work and decision-making.

**Regional UNDG Teams:** The six Regional UNDG Teams play a critical role in driving the UNDG Strategic Priorities by supporting UN Country Teams with strategic priority setting, analysis and advice based on their four core functions: (i) technical support to UN Country Teams; (ii) quality assurance of UNDAFs; (iii) performance management of Resident Coordinators; (iv) troubleshooting in difficult country situations. They will provide reinforced support to UNCTs for strategic priority setting and addressing cross-fertilization of best practices among countries to ensure that UN operational activities are rendered to maximum effect and are consistently aligned with national priorities in areas of UN comparative advantage.

**Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams:** Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams will implement the UNDG Strategic Priorities by identifying the national policies, programmes and capacity development gaps and challenges, to which the UN system can best contribute under national ownership and leadership by mobilizing the full range of mandates and expertise of the UN development system.

## UNDG Strategic Priorities 2013-2016

### Overarching Goal

**Deliver effective support to countries for sustainable, equitable and accountable development under national ownership and leadership.**

### Strategic Priorities

- **MDG/IADG Achievement:** Support countries in accelerating achievement of the MDGs and internationally agreed development goals and treaty obligations with equity by assigning priority to poverty eradication guided by national development priorities
- **Post-2015 Agenda:** Facilitate broad-based engagement in the global dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda building on the experience of the MDGs and core UN principles of human rights, equality and sustainability, linking to national development priorities and strategies
- **Crisis/Post-Crisis Transition:** Help build resilient societies and deliver effective support for sustainable recovery in crisis and post-crisis countries by ensuring mutually reinforcing linkages between the political, development, humanitarian, rule of law, human rights and social and security dimensions of UN engagement
- **National Capacity Development and Development Effectiveness:** Strengthen support for national capacity development, including through “upstream” policy and programme advice, incentivizing the use of national systems, sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and strengthening the normative approach and operational linkages, including human rights and gender equality

### Strategic Entry Points

#### Delivering as One / UNDAF roll-out

Support the next generation of Delivering as One through strategic, simplified UNDAFs focused on results, and an integrated package of support based on Standard Operating Procedures that are aligned with national needs, priorities and systems

#### Crisis/post-crisis transition

Provide coherent support to sustainable recovery through enhanced coordination and incorporation of needs and specificities of these countries in development programmes and processes



### Strategic Approaches

**to ensure the UN development system is more relevant, coherent, efficient and effective in its support to developing countries**

Promote a coherent results culture across the entire UN development system	Ensure the functioning of the RC system as participatory, collegial and mutually accountable	Accelerate simplification and harmonization of business practices in conjunction with HLCM	Foster effective partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and sustain a strategic and coherent results culture across the UN development system</li> <li>➤ Ensure UNCTs support national strategies and report system-wide results to national authorities</li> <li>➤ Develop effective, simplified tools for joint programming/UNDAF</li> <li>➤ Maximize use of improved common RBM planning, monitoring, evaluating and reporting tools</li> <li>➤ Promote joint funding approaches, including through Common Budgetary Frameworks and improved joint funding mechanisms</li> <li>➤ Strengthen independent system-wide evaluation</li> <li>➤ Increase incentives and support for coherence, quality assurance, and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement and monitor the Management and Accountability System</li> <li>➤ Ensure the UN system has the right mix of capacities and skills; improve selection, training, appraisal and retention of staff</li> <li>➤ Ensure countries benefit from full range of UN system mandates and resources, including NRAs</li> <li>➤ Improve system capacity to deploy knowledge and know-how</li> <li>➤ Ensure the UN system remains responsive to varying country needs and contexts, and is guided by national priorities.</li> <li>➤ Ensure system-wide cost-sharing of the RC system; provide financial, technical, and organizational support</li> <li>➤ Delegate authority from headquarters to country-level representatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maximize use of common, consolidated support services</li> <li>➤ Invest in intra-agency rationalization of business operations</li> <li>➤ Align and harmonize rules, policies and procedures in finance, human resources, procurement, ICT etc.</li> <li>➤ Harmonize cost classification</li> <li>➤ Develop cost recovery frameworks with the goal of full cost recovery</li> <li>➤ Accelerate progress in deepening coordination with Secretariat entities</li> <li>➤ Establish cost-effective common premises when possible</li> <li>➤ Reduce transaction costs for all stakeholders through strategic application of joint funding mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengthen cooperation and coordination among development activities, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts</li> <li>➤ Strengthen normative and operational linkages and ensure coherence with all pillars of the UN system and the CEB</li> <li>➤ Mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation</li> <li>➤ Strengthen operational partnerships with other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank</li> <li>➤ Strengthen cooperation with regional entities</li> <li>➤ Support inclusive cooperation between stakeholders at country level</li> <li>➤ Engage with Member States to improve the quantity of core and the quality of non-core funding</li> </ul>