# COMMUNICATIONS
# AND ADVOCACY

UNDAF CAMPANION GUIDANCE

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this companion guidance is to provide a practical hands-on tool to ensure effective communications and advocacy as an integral part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process. It should be read as a complement to the 2017 UNDAF Guidance and relates closely to the other seven companion guidance pieces on programming principles, the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the UN Vision 2030, the theory of change, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, and funding to financing.

To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, effective, joined-up communication is critical. People, businesses, civil society and governments need to know what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are and how they can engage and take action to bring about change and create a sustainable future. People—particularly the most disadvantaged—need to participate in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

The vastly changed communications landscape offers unprecedented opportunities. The rise of social media in particular has enabled direct dialogue with audiences who use digital platforms as a way not only to access information but also to engage on issues of concern. Social movements of recent years have played out on social media in an expression of active digital citizenship. For the work of the UN at the country level, this means that change towards development objectives as formulated in the UNDAF outcomes can be supported and even driven through digital channels, effectively blurring the line between programme and communications. Communications and public advocacy are no longer only a means to promote results; they are a means to deliver results. As such, communications and public advocacy must be fully integrated into programme planning and delivery.

The 2030 Agenda is fundamentally different from its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals. The new agenda is universal and transformative, cutting across sectors and silos. To deliver on the promises made by governments, business as usual is no longer possible. An integrated agenda demands that communications and programme colleagues work together from the start to capitalize on communications and public advocacy as a key means of implementation.

Effective and strategic communications helps to ensure that transparency, accountability and wide ownership and engagement are achieved. The 2017 UNDAF Guidance provides entry points for an integrated communications and programmatic approach to deliver on the principle of leaving no one behind.

## PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THIS COMPANION GUIDANCE

This companion piece is for both programme and communications staff at country level. It aims to demonstrate why the communications and advocacy lens is critical for results, and provides guidance on how to apply it to the design, **development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation** of the UNDAF.

This guidance builds on the [Guide to Communicating as One](), which focuses primarily on how to implement "Communicating as One," one of the five pillars of the Standard Operating Procedures for countries adopting the "Delivering as One" approach.
It is also meant to be utilized in conjunction with the UNDG Practical Guide for Advocacy to Promote Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## DEFINITIONS

The term public advocacy applies when the provision of information is geared toward achieving change or a specific goal; for example, to achieve outcomes in development or advance human rights. Public advocacy can take the shape of:

- **Social mobilization**, i.e., engaging the wider public around a cause, usually with a view to convincing decision makers to take action. An example would be a campaign that calls for the provision of services to survivors of violence against women through the government.
- **Behaviour change communications**, i.e., engaging the public or specific segments to change habits. An example would be a campaign that encourages schoolchildren to wash their hands frequently to avoid disease.

Public advocacy is supported by external communications. Targeted external communications promotes UN and partner ideas, voices and results; engages audiences and enhances accountability. External communications should be used to bolster advocacy for results, and can take the shape of:

- **Digital platforms**, including social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook
- Media engagement with local, regional and global news outlets, in particular print and broadcast media.

# 2. THE CONCEPT

Communications and advocacy are critical at each stage of the UNDAF. In the **UNDAF design and development stage**, they are key to ensuring that people's voices and priorities are taken into account by tapping into their unique knowledge as experts in their own lives. This is more possible today than ever before, supported by social media and other modern information and communications technologies, and building on the UN's track record in constructively engaging people to voice priorities and monitor progress.[1]

In the **UNDAF implementation stage**, communications and advocacy components, properly budgeted, can help achieve UNDAF outcomes by raising public awareness, and changing perceptions and, eventually, behaviour. Social media can be a key tool in this stage. By employing solid communications techniques, the UN can better appeal to people's emotions to move them to action, and connect with them in language they can grasp, beyond institutional and technical jargon. By utilizing communications to define a compelling vision for the future, and by fostering social mobilization towards change, communications and public advocacy can help drive progress towards UNDAF outcomes and build ownership for the work of the UN.

In the **UNDAF monitoring and evaluation stage**, communications and advocacy supports UN transparency and accountability. It is an opportunity to check in with people in a given country and make needed adjustments to ensure interventions respond to people's needs. An UNDAF evaluation, beyond assessing the UN's contribution to development, can be an opportunity to demonstrate to people how UN interventions and partnerships have benefitted the country.

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[1]  The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) "World We Want" national consultations and the My World survey enabled 10 million people to make their voices heard on changes they saw as essential for the global development agenda, which helped to shape the SDGs.
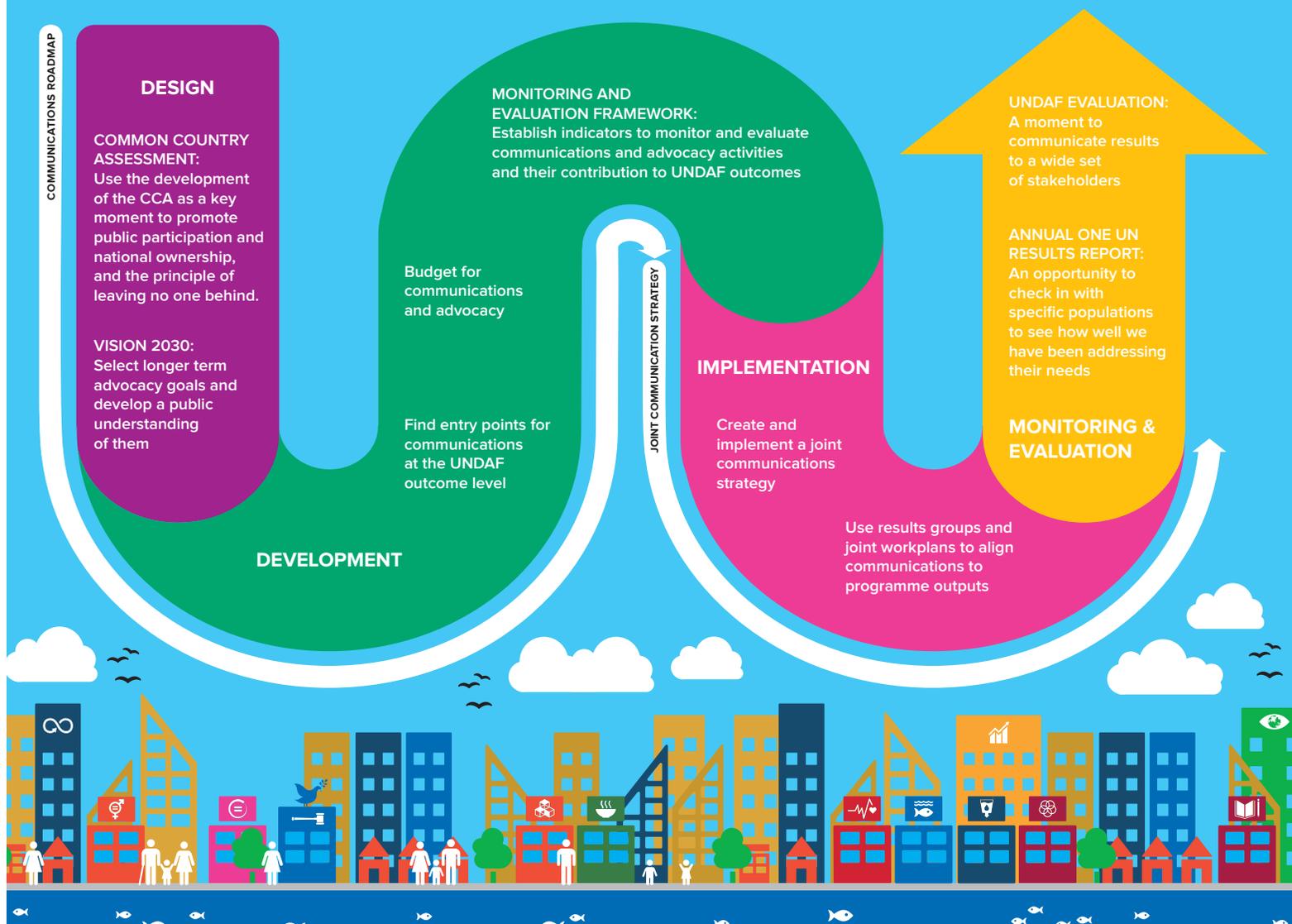
# 3. MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

The Communicating as One Standard Operating Procedure and **associated guidance** lay the groundwork for joined-up UN action in communications and advocacy. The core elements of Communicating as One are:

- A UN Communications Group (UNCG) at country level; and
- A joint communications strategy that supports UNDAF outcomes.

These are the basics—a team of UN colleagues focusing on communications, and a strategy for how communications and advocacy will help support the achievement of UNDAF results.

On a practical level, the UNCG can support the different stages outlined above: UNDAF design and development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

## ENTRY POINTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY IN THE UNDAF CYCLE

COMMUNICATIONS ROADMAP

### DESIGN

**COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT:**
Use the development of the CCA as a key moment to promote public participation and national ownership, and the principle of leaving no one behind.

**VISION 2030:**
Select longer term advocacy goals and develop a public understanding of them

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK:**
Establish indicators to monitor and evaluate communications and advocacy activities and their contribution to UNDAF outcomes

Budget for communications and advocacy

Find entry points for communications at the UNDAF outcome level

**DEVELOPMENT**

JOINT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

### IMPLEMENTATION

Create and implement a joint communications strategy

Use results groups and joint workplans to align communications to programme outputs

**UNDAF EVALUATION:**
A moment to communicate results to a wide set of stakeholders

**ANNUAL ONE UN RESULTS REPORT:**
An opportunity to check in with specific populations to see how well we have been addressing their needs

### MONITORING & EVALUATION

In the **UNDAF design and development stage**, the UNCG should create a joint communications and advocacy roadmap. The roadmap should:

- Outline how communications will support the design and development of the UNDAF, bringing together the expertise of all resident and non-resident UN entities at county level; and

- Outline key actions that the UNCG can take under the guidance of the UN Country Team (UNCT) to help ensure that communication is a strategic tool to support UNDAF design and development.

Overall, the roadmap aims to:

- Reflect a clear understanding of how communications and advocacy are used as strategic approaches to ensure the development of the UNDAF in a participatory way;
- Ensure that communications and advocacy serve as strategic tools to achieve UNDAF outcomes; and
- Ensure communications and advocacy are built into the UNDAF monitoring framework, if outcomes related to communications are included.

In the **UNDAF implementation stage**, the UNCG should develop a joint communications strategy based on the roadmap and following the Standard Operating Procedures for countries adopting the "Delivering as One" approach.

The joint communications strategy will ensure that the communications and advocacy objectives and activities are aligned with, and support the achievement of, UNDAF outcomes. Communications and advocacy activities and indicators should be developed within the joint programming process, and adequately resourced and monitored for effectiveness.

In the **UNDAF monitoring and evaluation stage**, advocacy with many partners and communications with the broader public are critical to demonstrating UN results and the UN's comparative advantage, and also to communicate compellingly how the work of the UN impacts people's lives in any given country. Communicating results during this stage and capturing feedback through two-way channels and mechanisms should be part of the joint communications strategy.

## 3.1 OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE UNDAF DESIGN STAGE

### ENGAGE PEOPLE'S VIEWS WHEN DEVELOPING THE CCA

The **development of the CCA** (hyperlink to CCA CGP)—the UN system's "independent and mandate-based articulation of the country context, opportunities and challenges"[2]—is a key moment to promote public participation and national ownership, and the principle of **leaving no one behind** (hyperlink to PPs CGP). Robust communications are critical to identifying and engaging key audiences, including the most excluded and marginalized communities, and to reaching out to potential beneficiaries to ensure a proper country analysis that provides an accurate sense of their needs, priorities and challenges—and puts people's perceptions on par with statistical data.

"In developing the CCA, the UN system uses its convening power to consult and engage with the government and other stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and marginalized people and their organizations, in order to reflect different perspectives. This is considered to be objective UN analysis, and is not a document that requires formal endorsement. The purpose of the CCA is to add value to existing analyses, including that of the government."[3]

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[2] UNDAF Guidance Final Draft (January 9, 2017), p. 21

[3] Ibid., p. 21.

Box 1

## Cameroon: Bringing the people into UN strategic planning

When the UNCT in Cameroon embarked on the development of the UNDAF, the use of social media was key. Using the hashtag #UNCMR4U (the UN in Cameroon for you), the team asked young people, women, refugees and other vulnerable groups questions related to their perception of UN work and its contributions to their country's development, and their views on the UN role in improving the lives of the people of Cameroon.

This exercise took the UN team across 6 of the 10 regions, targeting mainly universities, spreading the word on how everyone would benefit from having their voices heard, and how to go about it. The team also enlisted the media to amplify the messages.

## Crowdsourcing Albania's UNDAF: Putting people in the driver's seat

In Albania, the UNCT engaged with the public to develop the CCA and the UNDAF.

For the UNDAF development process, consultations were organized in selected regions. Civil society activists, media, students, local and central government representatives, Roma, people with disabilities and other minority groups participated actively. The consultations focused on priority areas for UN involvement, the comparative advantages of the UN versus other partners, and guidance on where the UN should focus its programmes.

To expand its reach, the UN in Albania also used a digitized foresight methodology called Futurescaper to create an online questionnaire. The team collected people's voices through video diaries and interviews. Many of the views collected were captured in the UN country programme.

## Listening to people's voices in the United Republic of Tanzania

Around 1,200 people participated in a mobile survey aimed at hearing people's voices.

The UNCT worked with the company GeoPoll, which administers surveys through SMS, voice or mobile web, to create a short list of key questions. Five questions were prepared that focused on UN activities and what people think the UN could do better. Respondents could also propose means of receiving and sending information to and from the UN.

The mobile survey was sent as a questionnaire in the Kiswahili language. It targeted the general public visiting an exhibition over a one-week period. Respondents came from across the mainland and Zanzibar, with each region, sex and age bracket represented.

This mobile survey was part of a series of stakeholder perception surveys that reached diverse audiences. The results were analysed to be used in the next UNDAF.

## The wisdom of crowds: Asking the citizens in Lao People's Democratic Republic

The UNCT supported the engagement of citizen experts, including from civil society and other partners, in planning through a combination of crowdsourcing, consultations and microgrants, blended with awareness-raising and advocacy. First, the team complemented the country analysis with a "wisdom of crowds" approach, i.e., crowdsourcing through three mini-surveys based on the Futurescaper online platform (hyperlink to UN Vision 2030 CGP). The surveys explored alternative perceptions of key development issues, their causes and effects, and priorities for the future of the country to 2021.

The UNCT also engaged local non-profit associations via microgrants to develop a series of studies that helped identify groups who have been left behind, looking into immediate and root causes as well as manifestations of vulnerability to ensure better targeting of UN support.

The CCA, and the compelling data it contains, can be used as an **instrument of advocacy**, to raise awareness and move people to action. If the government agrees, the UNCG can make an advocacy moment out of the document's publication. If the government doesn't agree to publish the CCA, the UNCG can translate key data and statistics into easily digestible speaking points for use in speeches, press releases and messaging on key issues.

## UTILIZE THE UN VISION 2030 EXERCISE AS A COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

The development of the **UN Vision 2030** (hyperlink to UN Vision 2030 CGP)—a document that addresses how the five-year UNDAF fits into the 15-year 2030 Agenda—is an opportunity for effective communications and advocacy, particularly as they relate to sustainable development. The UN Vision 2030 strategically aligns UN priorities with the national vision and gives UNCTs the opportunity to ensure the UNDAF is being developed based on long-term trends and short-term objectives for SDG advocacy.

The UN Vision 2030 paper can be used to identify longer term advocacy goals and milestones, and promote a public understanding of them. These goals can help shape a multiyear advocacy plan geared towards achieving a 2030 Agenda that is embedded within the joint communication strategy.[4]

**BOX 2**

**Preparing for the future(s): Foresight, citizens' insights and serious games**

The UN in Montenegro invited citizens to engage in an online foresight game where they had to identify SDG issues. Within four days, 700 people replied; social media helped promote involvement. Offline workshops were also held, where vulnerable youth played games in order to identify different sets of issues and to think about futures up to 2021 and 2030. The outcomes of these sessions were relayed to senior decision makers and captured in planning documents. Representatives of government also explored preferred and likely futures of Montenegro and its possible development and human rights directions. Foresight and back-casting were used during strategic planning meetings with representatives of national institutions, such as the Government, Parliament and Ombudsperson's office.

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[4] Use other tools, like the One UN Country Results Report, to share advocacy and communications progress, and advocate for changes or adaptations to the UNDAF and/or national policies.

## 3.2 OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UNDAF DEVELOPMENT STAGE

### ENTRY POINTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN UNDAF OUTCOMES

The development of the UNDAF includes a number of points where the communications and advocacy lens adds value. While UNDAF outcomes are developed primarily by programme colleagues, involving the UNCG in the process can help to identify how communications can be utilized to achieve programmatic results. Under the new guidance, UNCGs should be involved in the development of UNDAF outcomes to find entry points for communication at the outcome level. This work can involve advocacy, social mobilization or behaviour change.

### BUDGET FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Communications is a critical part of achieving UNDAF results. Appropriate resources, both human and financial, need to be allocated not only for advocacy and communications activities, but also to monitor and measure their effectiveness as a step towards contributing to the final effectiveness of the UNDAF. A budget should be allocated for communications and advocacy at the development phase, just like any other UNDAF area.

The medium-term Common Budgetary Framework is the consolidated financial framework that reflects the agreed, costed results of the UNDAF, including operations, communications and evaluation. It includes a clear articulation of resources to be mobilized as a basis for more coherent approaches to funding partners.

### INCLUDE A MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The UNDAF monitoring and evaluation framework should also contain clear indicators for measuring advocacy, including communications targets and their contribution to the achievement of UNDAF outcomes, as applicable.

To ensure the principle of accountability, consider whether some of the data collected and analysed for UNDAF monitoring and evaluation should be shared publicly. This should be a decision taken on specific data points, as key pieces of data can be useful for maintaining public accountability of the UN's activities at country level. However, data privacy should also be considered where data are geographically specific and/or can be misused. Several UNCTs now have digital UNDAF planning platforms that make it easier to select which data will be made public. Data visualization and the availability of downloadable "CSV" files are a best practice to encourage public understanding of data trends.

Data on expenditure should be considered for publication, and in such cases, the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data standard is already applied by several UNDG member and observer agencies in publishing monthly, quarterly or annual expenditure data. The IATI standard now has an SDG tagging facility as well. UNCTs should recommend the adoption of the IATI standard to implementing partners.

UNDAF evaluation findings may be something that should and could be shared publicly. Data visualization of evaluation findings from evaluation reports can help communicate the impact of the UN in a country; this can be supported by the UNCG.

## 3.3 COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY TO SUPPORT UNDAF IMPLEMENTATION

### Create and execute a Joint Communications Strategy

The implementation phase is a key moment when communications can support programmatic objectives. The UNCG can work together towards this goal by creating a joint communications strategy, which connects communications objectives to the UNDAF outcomes. Aligning communications objectives with programme objectives facilitates monitoring and evaluating the communications strategy and its associated work plan.

### Take advantage of programme coordination mechanisms

To successfully align communications to programme outputs, the UNCG should take advantage of existing programme coordination mechanisms. For example, Results Groups and joint work plans translate UNDAF outcomes into concrete, measurable and time-bound programme outputs.

The development of **joint work plans** is an opportunity to assess if advocacy and communications can be a useful approach to reach programme objectives. Once it is clear how communications can help, identified advocacy and

## BOX 4

### Building peace in Colombia

UNDAF issues can be used to unify UN country team communication, focusing collaboration on common development goals rather than on individual agency mandates. In Colombia, the UNCT has brought agencies together around a "culture of peace" campaign, and sees great potential in the SDGs, which offer common issues and stress integration. Peacebuilding and sustainable development are the two strategic outcomes of its current UNDAF**.**

### UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign in Albania

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Tirana, the campaign "I choose to live without violence" kicked off. The campaign was a national call to prevent and report gender-based and domestic violence, and introduce solutions and dedicated services for female survivors. Tirana and other communities marked the day with public discussions, fundraising, performances, and art installations to engage young boys and girls.

Launched by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the campaign was extended through March 2017. In various urban and rural areas, activities involved local communities, civil society and state institutions in advocating a society free of violence.

**Guinea-Bissau: Communications to navigate political instability**

The UN in Benin set up an online monitoring platform for the UNDAF as an innovative response to the need for transparency and mutual accountability among partners as well as with beneficiaries.
Anyone in Benin can send a free SMS to provide feedback or ask questions about any UN programme in the country. The platform's goal is real-time monitoring of UN Benin achievements and UNDAF results indicators; the dissemination of information through email and SMS to the Beninese Government and development partners; and the involvement of the population in UN interventions through SMS. To publicize the new platform, the UN launched a communications campaign to reach people and show them why they would benefit from having their voices heard, and how to go about it.

communications objectives and activities will feed into the UNCG annual work plan.

The UNCG annual work plan is a good opportunity to agree on a division of labour among agencies and to be transparent about the work the UN does. It should be developed at the beginning of the year, when all agencies are discussing their own work plans. This helps identify synergies that might involve saving funds or the allocation of funds for joint communication activities. The UNCG work plan also ensures that agency communications are complementary rather than competitive.

Linking communications objectives with joint work plan objectives will bring coherence to the work of the UNCG. This could also help to secure funding for the group's work plan.

Individual agencies have the opportunity to extract communications and advocacy issues from the **Result Groups** and integrate them into agency communications plans, based on their mandate and comparative advantage. For example, advocacy and communications might be a strategic approach to promote nutrition, a possible UNDAF outcome. In this case, agencies with a related mandate can also incorporate this component into their own agency advocacy and communication plans.[5]

## 3.4 COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY IN THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION STAGE

**ANNUAL ONE UN RESULTS REPORT**

The annual One UN Country Results Report is an opportunity for advocacy with many actors (government, the general public, donors, etc.). A monitoring exercise, it is a chance to share UN results and comparative advantage in addressing specific issues when supporting the government and other partners.

The One UN Country Results Report should capture how UN work impacts people's lives in any given country. Speaking about UN results needs to reach the general public. Facts and issues reflected in the report should be explained in a way that can be easily understood, without UN jargon.

The report is also an opportunity to reflect back on the participatory exercises done at the CCA and UN Vision 2030 stages, when specific populations articulated their needs, priorities and views for a better future. How is the UN addressing these issues? What results can the UNCT

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[5] Joint UN communications work should be reflected in the work plans of the information officers of the different UN agencies working in the country.

share with those communities reached in the design stage of the UNDAF?

**USE THE UNDAF EVALUATION AS A MOMENT TO CHECK BACK WITH A WIDE SET OF STAKEHOLDERS**

At the end of the UNDAF cycle, to promote accountability, transparency and national ownership, and to inform people of UN progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda, the UNDAF evaluation can be used to communicate results and advocate for continued progress. The goal is to promote accountability to stakeholders. After offering their views, people will expect to be informed of the ways in which their views have been reflected. It is also important to ensure that the general public and development partners understand the role of the UN and its comparative advantage in promoting the 2030 Agenda.

The UNDAF evaluation can be a moment to check back and show the publicz and the government how development funds have been used. Making the UNDAF evaluation public may require translating key findings into non-technical jargon, and creating communications materials to publicize it, including data visualizations.

A good example is when the UN in Viet Nam used an independent evaluation of its One Programme to publish four case studies highlighting how the UN supported the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. One case study in particular focused on opening space for citizen participation, while another explored evidence-based advocacy.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) unites the 31 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development. Since 2008, the UNDG has been one of the three pillars of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the highest-level coordination forum of the United Nations system.

At the regional level, six Regional UNDG Teams play a critical role in driving UNDG priorities by supporting UN Country Teams with strategic priority setting, analysis and advice.

At the country level, 131 UN Country Teams serving 165 countries and territories work together to increase the synergies and joint impact of the UN system.

The Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) is the secretariat of the UNDG, bringing together the UN development system to promote change and innovation to deliver together on sustainable development.