

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REFORM – CHECKLIST FOR UNSDG ENTITIES’ GOVERNING BODIES








In response to Member States request in General Assembly resolution 76/4 on the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding arrangement, the Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group has developed a checklist for the consideration of the governing bodies of the United Nations development system entities, to “facilitate their oversight role, including monitoring alignment and entity adherence to the dual reporting model.”.




The checklist covers the elements of the repositioning of the UN development system, as set out in General Assembly resolution 72/279, and as such, applies to all entities of the UN development system. **For each question, entities are requested to briefly explain how the entity is implementing the requirement, or, if it is not implemented, briefly set out the plans and timeline to do so.**

Yes	In progress	No	NA	No Change
✓	↔ ON!	✗	...	—

A NEW GENERATION OF UN COUNTRY TEAMS	Yes/No	Please elaborate <i>(Explain how the entity is implementing the requirement, or, if not implemented, plans and timelines to do so)</i>
<i>Country Programmes/Strategies and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks¹</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity have a policy to ensure compliance with the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) requirement to “consult with the Resident Coordinator at key stages of entity-specific strategic planning”? 	↔ ON! —	UN-Habitat’s regional representatives (RR) and heads of country offices comply with the overall UNSDG guidance on the MAF, including the need for consulting with the RC on country strategic planning in countries where UN-Habitat is present. This is mutually beneficial practice as it also facilitates the integration of country-level urban knowhow into regional/country strategic planning necessary to speed up the implementation of sustainable urbanization as part of the Agency’s contribution to the 2030 development Agenda. Recently, UN-Habitat has initiated a new practice of inviting RCs to its global advocacy activities such as the World Urban Forums (WUF) pursuing further engagement with them through a strategic dialogue on identified

¹ Source: Management and Accountability Framework and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework guidance




<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, please briefly describe how your entity monitors compliance of this requirement? 		<p>themes for future programming. While working on a specific policy guidance to be approved as part the Agency’s next strategic plan 2026-2029, UN-Habitat senior management continue to encourage the existing good practices of engagement with UNCTs in consultation with RCs, which should be reported on by RRs and UN-Habitat’s country heads in their performance evaluation on a regular basis. The Agency’s new strategic plan shall provide an opportunity to evolve from a good practice to an institutionalized policy and a related compliance monitoring arrangement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity’s policy ensure compliance with the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) requirement to “formally solicit feedback from Resident Coordinators on the alignment [of entity-specific country programming] to the UN Cooperation Framework”? <p>If yes, please briefly describe how your entity monitors compliance of this requirement?</p>	   	<p>This is taking place increasingly as part of the established good practices of collaboration with UNCTs and RCs, who in several cases have co-signed UN-Habitat’s country programme documents after participating in their developments. In all regions, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Arab States and the Middle-East, Asia and the Pacific, UN-habitat’s RRs and heads and country offices maintain a regular collaboration with members of UNCTs under the leadership influencing the dialogues for inclusion of the urban dimensions into the UNSDCF. Moreover, in countries where a CCA process was developed, UN-HABITAT was involved and provided substantive inputs. UN-Habitat Country Offices also contribute to the regular reporting on the progress of the implementation of the UNSDCF).</p> <p>Presently, the unique monitoring mechanism remains through performance evaluation of RRs and Heads of COs, based on regular reporting and tangible outputs. However, the Agency’s new strategic plan 2026-2029 shall provide an opportunity to institutionalize a good practice by means of a strategic policy guidance and a specific compliance monitoring arrangement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity’s guidance require your country programme to be developed after 	 	<p>YES. UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) template is under review and shall be amended accordingly depending on the context.</p>

<p>Cooperation Framework priorities have been agreed with Government?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity governing body systematically review the derivation of country programmes from the Cooperation Frameworks? 	 —	<p>The review of UN-Habitat’s country projects and programmes follows an internal process managed by the Programme Review committee (PRC), coordinated both at the Headquarters (HQ) and country (Regional PRC) levels. Governing Bodies approve the overall strategic orientations as they approve UN-Habitat’s work programme, but the review of development and implementation of programmes (at all levels) takes place within RPC (at HQ and Regional levels).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all the development activities of your entity at the country level captured in the Joint Workplan of the Cooperation Framework? 	 —	<p>It all depends on governments demands and timelines. In principle this is sought all the time, but not always possible. In some countries programming of UN-Habitat follows UNSDCF. However, country specific UNSDCF do not necessarily capture all activities of entities, particularly non-resident agencies like UN-Habitat. Another challenge is the attempt to dominate the process of negotiation over the outputs/activities by some agencies. That’s the reason why prioritization (of issues and countries) is key in UN-Habitat’s practices.</p>
<p><i>Country Configuration²</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity’s policy require that your country representatives systematically engage with the UNCT to review configuration of your country-level capacities, in response to a new Cooperation Framework, as per the Cooperation Framework guidance? In how many countries did this exercise lead to a change in your business models, country-level footprint and/or programming? 	 — —	<p>UN-Habitat abides by the overall UNSDCF guidance on the configuration of entities country-level capacities, but there has not been any urgent need so far to systematize this. In all regions, UN-Habitat’s field teams and country-level footprint have been maintained within the required size as mandated by UN-Habitat’s Governing Bodies through the approved regional architecture. In some regions, e.g. Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), a type of intervention and a business model has been defined after negotiation with RC and government. In Asia and the Pacific, the configuration of capacity of UNH country teams are assessed and continuously adjusted to project needs, with a view of maintaining continuous senior leadership (HPM, CTA) for participation in UNCT processes. Given project resources, the capacity of UN-Habitat teams can significantly vary during a UNSDCF cycle.</p>




² Source: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance











<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In how many countries did this exercise lead to an increase in the relative share of policy advice vis-à-vis project implementation, including large-scale procurement support? 	<p>...</p>	<p>In Africa, a good example can be given from <i>Mauritius</i> where UN-Habitat’s engagement in UNCT reconfiguration recently has led into increased focus on urban resilience. But as a nonresident entity operating with exclusively project funded budgets at the field level, UN-Habitat’s country offices configuration has been generally small to impact on operational and procurement support. In countries where UN-Habitat is not present, Inter-Regional Advisors based at HQ have helped to promote the Agency’s mandate as a non-resident agency. This has been particularly successful in Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia where UN-Habitat has no regional office but has maintained a minimal presence through its inter-regional advisor ensuring visibility for delivery where appropriate. In other countries, urban advisors among qualified local staff have been supporting similar tasks no matter the UNCT configuration in their respective countries.</p>
<p><i>Multi-Country Office Review</i>³</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has your entity reviewed and adjusted its programme responses and resource allocations in support of the priorities of Small Island Developing States? 	<p>✓ —</p>	<p>Several programming initiatives in support of SIDS have been developed, funded and are current under implementation (e.g. slum upgrading, climate change, SDG cities, resilience). In Africa, ROAF is developing a strategy for support to SIDS countries on urban resilience. In Asia, ROAP has always included SIDS considerations in the regional strategic planning, despite the limited resources to support programming and implementation. With minimal resources, high-level engagements such as Pacific Urban Forum could only be possible in collaboration with the UN system, UNESCAP, and local gov associations in the respective SIDS.</p>

³ Source: UN General Assembly resolution 74/297










<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the Multi-Country Office review, has your entity taken concrete steps to review the appropriate expertise and organizational arrangements in MCO settings, where required? 		<p>As a project funded entity, resources remain a key factor of success for UN-Habitat to achieve full compliance. Without proper funding, UN-Habitat’s support to the UNMCOs has been largely remote. The fact is that with no recourses, it is not always possible to ensure presence in-person in the relevant UNMCOs, and to take part at all working groups levels at the regional and country levels. In a strategic approach, UN-Habitat has increased the efficiency of its own regional offices, by creating sub-regional and multi country offices also providing specific services and advise to the related UN regional institutions and offices.</p>
<p><i>Efficiencies⁴</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has your entity put in place a system to track efficiency gains, achieved individually as well as jointly with other UN entities? If yes, is the system using the agreed UNSDG common methodology for measuring the impact of efficiency initiatives? 		<p>UN-Habitat supports the UNSDG established methodology of tracking efficiency gains through the UNINFO portal and several regional and country reports shared with HQ by field teams. Despite continued dependency on unpredictable earmarked resources in the field, UN-Habitat ensures engagement in the Common back offices (CBOs), Business Operation Strategy (BOS), Mutual Recognition (MR), and Common Premises as provided for by the UNDS reform. Some good practices were reported in the Arab States with the Agency’s participation in the regional operations Management Team (ROMT) led by UNESCWA/UNICEF, its contribution to the BOS and CP in a few countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Kuwait & Lebanon). In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat is engaged in CBO in several countries (Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Brazil/Rio de Janeiro), while it shares on CP location in Asia and the Pacific (Thailand, Bangkok).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity report annually to its governing body on (a) entity-specific efficiency gains and (b) contribution to system-wide efficiency gains? 		<p>UN-Habitat has informed the Executive Board on the modality of Multi country Hubs to gain efficiency in services provided to countries, particularly in Middle Income Countries (e.g. LAC, South East Asia). The current briefings to the Executive Board through detailed secretariat’s Notes and updates by means of checklists since last 2023 contribute to the Agency’s reporting duties to the governing bodies.</p>

⁴ Source: UN General Assembly Resolution 72/279 and UN General Assembly Resolution 76/4




<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What % of your entity’s premises are common premises? 		<p>This is still work in progress, no estimates in percentages can be provided at this stage. It is a fact that UN-Habitat supports the common premises approach. In cases where project offices are located within partner institutions of the host country, UN-Habitat ensures the regular presence at the UN House, often a desk is provided for colleagues as in the case of Azerbaijan or Serbia. Generally, common premises are used in key countries covered by regions, also given the high costs and low availability of space in several UN compounds, e.g. UN Home in Mexico/LAC. Common premises with UNEP in Panama City, Common premises with UNHCR in Bogotá, common premises with UNDSS in Rio de Janeiro (Regional team) and hosted by counterpart in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil substantive team). For the Arab states, 4 out of the 13 COs (Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia) are currently part of common premises. Egypt office will also be part of a common premises scheduled to be ready in 2025. In Africa, UN-Habitat complies in Somalia, Senegal, Abidjan, Burkina, Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda. For Asia and the Pacific: common premises are used in about half of the countries covered by the agency (e.g. Afghanistan, Philippines, Pakistan).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In how many countries does your entity participate in a Common Back Office? 		<p>This is still work in progress for UN-Habitat. (See above, the answer given to the questions on efficiencies) A full report may be submitted to the Executive Board at its next session.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization obtain services through another entity’s Global Shared Service Centers or through other global shared means? • To what extent have you had to front load investment in order to support joint efficiency gains? 		<p>Given the need for establishing services closer to the point of delivery, UN-Habitat continues to search for the best opportunities to achieve full compliance in this point, such a done through UNON at HQ. A full report may be submitted to the Executive Board at its next session.</p>

REINVIGORATING THE ROLE OF THE RC SYSTEM ⁵	Yes/No	Please elaborate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the job description of your entity country representatives been revised as appropriate, following the reform, to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the role and responsibility of the Resident Coordinator? Reflect their accountability to the Resident Coordinator for their contribution to agreed results as defined in the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency development agreements? Reflect the responsibility for active engagement in UNCT? 	    	<p>Corporate guidance was agreed with DCO and shared with all regional and country offices to recognize the role and responsibility of the RC working and collaborating with UN-Habitat’s country representatives on certain goal/s towards the joint programming and implementation. In that connection, UN-Habitat’s engagement with the UNCTs and its contribution to the CF in countries where it is present should be supported for performance evaluation annually by the RC. The JD of UN-Habitat’s heads of country offices and regional representatives have been gradually adjusted to include an element of the collaboration with UNCTs and RCs in all regions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity ensure that RCs have an opportunity to input on the skillsets and leadership profile in selecting new country representatives? If yes, please briefly describe how your entity monitors compliance of this requirement? 	 	<p>This is in progress. Consultations with RC on such issues are done on a regular basis through ROs, but no systematic inputs are required from them into TOR/classification. A good example of the above may be picked from Asia and the Pacific where RCs are consulted prior to the launch of VAs, for inputs. When meeting/discussing with RCs, ROAP senior managers ensure to capture the UNCTs needs UNCTs and integrate them accordingly into the JD. Similar efforts are undertaken in other regions to ensure a swift communication with RC whenever possible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the performance assessment system of your entity’s country representatives? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Embed characteristics of the UN leadership framework? Have at least one key result area linked to contribution to collective UNCT results? Include a metric on the number of joint programmes they supported? 	  	<p>Unlike RRs, many COs representatives are not full UN staff and do not participate in the electronic performance appraisal system (EPAS), therefore systems have been devised to work on an offline consultation. But in principle, this is goal one in all work plans of country managers, representation and collaboration in UNCT/ with UNRCO is mandated.</p> <p>However, joint programming is still to be prioritized, as UN-Habitat too often lacks core resources to solicit interest of large resident agencies. When Joint Programmes are accomplished, then a country manager will be complemented strongly.</p>




⁵ Source: Management and Accountability Framework










<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what % of countries has the RC provided input into the performance review of your entity representative? 	 	RC don't review the performance evaluation documents of UN-Habitat's RR but they may be requested by the Agency's senior leadership – if needed, to provide additional comments in relation to the alignment and engagement of UN-Habitat's representatives in UNCTs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your country representatives inform the performance assessment of Resident Coordinators by providing feedback on RC behaviors against the RC leadership profile? 		In all regions.
REVAMPING THE REGIONAL APPROACH⁶	Yes/No	Please elaborate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity have a policy in place to ensure your participation in rosters of expertise at regional level? Does your entity have a policy in place to provide surge capacity when requested by Resident Coordinators on behalf of the UN country teams? 	 	There is participation in some regions (e.g. LAC, Africa) on rosters of expertise that are under development, e.g. in countries such as Malawi, or in West Africa with the UNISS framework. ROAS was engaged in the roaster of expertise at regional level led by UNESCWA on behalf of the RCP. This is not the case for ROAP. UN-Habitat provide surge capacity from HQ, regional, sub-regional and programme hubs and subject to availability of financial resources from the demand side to cover cost of services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has your entity made expertise available to the country level through participation in Regional Collaborative Platforms, including the Issue-Based Coalitions? 	 	Yes - through RCP and IBC as financial resources allow. ROAP RR and Bangkok office have significantly engaged. In all regions, RRs have participated in RCPs or assigned experts on issue-based coalition on digital transformation, climate change, human mobility, migration, urbanization etc. In Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, the representation at RCP has been provided by UN-Habitat's Inter-Regional Advisor who also follows up with the established IBCs to mainstream urbanization and housing issues. UNH has been active in RCP in Africa through IBC 3 on digital supporting Malawi, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your entity' Regional Directors, as members of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs), 	 	This work in progress to be gradually formalized within the framework of the new regional architecture which should also provide guidance on the performance compact of RRs and senior COs staff. However, in practice, all the sub-section from a)

⁶ Source: Management and Accountability Framework

<p>include in their individual performance compacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) their accountability for collective regional results as agreed in the RCP? (b) their role in ensuring implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework at the regional and country level (c) their responsibility in driving joint results at the country level in line with the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency agreements (d) Their responsibility in ensuring their representatives in countries have the skill sets and profile of leadership that would be particularly relevant in the given country context ahead of selection and deployment? 		<p>to d) are being addressed collectively and UN-Habitat’s representatives pay their contribution in places where their present.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your Regional Directors or equivalent representatives of entities that comprise the UNCT contribute to the performance appraisal of the RCs? 		<p>Yes. This is normal practice. Participation in yearly RCP collective review of RCs performance in ROAP, ROAS and ROAF and in Eastern Europe and, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.</p>
<p>STRATEGIC DIRECTION, OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SYSTEM WIDE RESULTS⁷</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Please elaborate</p>
<p><i>Strategic Plans</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your entity’s strategic planning documents set out how the entity is working as part of the 		<p>UN-Habitat’s current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 – extended to 2025 did not formally provide guidance on how the Agency was to engage with the UNDS reform. Indeed, it referred to the reform, but the current engagement is mainly guided the UNSDG</p>

⁷ Source: Management and Accountability Framework

<p>repositioned UN development system at the global, regional and country level?</p>		<p>guidance which UN-Habitat fully supports. Within the framework of the its new strategic plan 2026-2029 and with improved funding situation a new arrangement shall be formalized to support full compliance and alignment repositioned UN Development System at regional and country levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity systematically communicate to all staff and representatives the new working methods needed in line with the reform of the UN development system? 		<p>Yes – this is happened at the divisional, interdivisional and regional levels. All key documentation and correspondence relating to the UNDS reform including modus operandi are communicated internally to all relevant staff by the focal points for UNDS reform assigned to the regional programme division.</p>
<p>Results Reporting</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity systematically contribute to the annual UN Country Results Report on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework? 		<p>Compliant, in all regions despite the limited financial resources to ensure swift reporting.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity ensure the systematic reporting of its results at the country level on the system-wide UN INFO platform? 		<p>Yes, in Africa, recently in Kenya, Guinea Bissau, Zambia, Mozambique. However, due to limited country presence and capacity, inputs in UNINFO are only provided in specific relevant countries, e.g Afghanistan, Indonesia and some Arab States as well as in selected countries in Eastern Europe and, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Recently, UN-Habitat has engaged with DOS/DCO to provide a training to country and HQ staff on understanding the UNINFO portal mechanism. Two focal points have been designated as the HQ approvers to ensure inputs entered in the platform are swift reviewed and processed for further use.</p>

FUNDING THE RC SYSTEM AND DELIVERING ON FUNDING COMPACT COMMITMENTS ⁸	Yes/No	Please elaborate
<i>Special Purpose Trust Fund for the RC System</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the amounts contributed by your entity to the SPTF as part of the 1% levy tally with the CEB estimates of overall tightly earmarked contributions? If no, how do you explain the difference and what steps the entity has taken to reduce the gap? 	 	<p>The 1% RC levy is being applied throughout and is a pre-condition for IPMR. The PRC checks on the suitability for each project.</p>
<i>Funding Compact</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity hold a structured dialogue with its governing body on how to finance the development results in the current strategic planning cycle? 	 	<p>Currently – the most appropriate framework to hold such a structured dialogue with UN-Habitat’s governing body on the funding compact is within the deliberations of the Executive Board as has been the case since 2023 with regular briefings on engagement with the UNDS reform including its funding compact.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your governing body monitor implementation of your respective entity’s and Member States’ Funding Compact commitments? 		<p>A recommendation has been included into the Note by the secretariat to the Executive Board proposing to issue a specific guidance on this.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What % of your entity’s programming consists of Joint Programmes? 	 	<p>At 30/35 %. It is common practice in UN-Habitat’s programming at country level. In most countries where UN-Habitat is signatory/part of the UNSDCFs, the organization is engaged in joint programming as appropriate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your entity have a policy guiding country representatives to make use of relevant global pooled funding mechanisms (e.g., Joint SDG Fund, Spotlight Initiative, Peacebuilding Fund)? 	 	<p>This is taking place, as part of the normal practice of projects and programmes portfolio management by regional and country offices. However, the frequent push-back from bigger Agencies remains a challenge in accessing considerable amounts of funding from pooled mechanisms.</p>

⁸ Source: General Assembly resolution 72/279, 76/4 and Funding Compact

