

2025 Report of the Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office and the Resident Coordinator system

Informal summary of key findings and recommendations

1. **Six years into the repositioning of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, the system has been at the forefront of strengthening country-level efforts to accelerate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through robust coordination and convening functions.** Working together with all UN development system entities – whether present in country or providing expertise from regional and global hubs – Resident Coordinators have enabled better integrated policy support, strategic partnerships, funding and financing solutions for SDG advancement, and synergies across UN interventions, along with increased accountability, transparency and efficiencies focused on maximizing responses to eradicate poverty and leave no-one behind. A number of areas require further strengthening to solidly root the RC system as the backbone of UN development efforts, including system-wide governance, quality of funding and capacities to fully leverage innovation and drive better tailored and more efficient responses.
2. **Independent assessment attested strong approval for the RC system's leadership and pointed to areas for improvement.** In 2024, an average of 88% of host countries surveyed by DESA acknowledged increased RC leadership and push for common results in 2024, 90% of contributing countries agreed the RC system scaled up collective action for the SDGs, and 89% of UNCT members agreed that RCs had successfully led the UNCT in providing support for changes in national policies and regulatory frameworks. The System-wide Evaluation Office also noted that RCs play key roles in enabling integrated UN policy advice and joint programming, but attested that RCs faced challenges in ensuring derivation of country programming instruments from Cooperation Frameworks and meaningful UNCT configuration exercises. The most recent OIOS evaluation of the RC system in complex settings similarly highlighted that RCs fostered a more unified UN programming approach, yet it noted the lack of capacities to meet additional demands increasingly placed upon RCs and Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCOs) in these contexts.
3. **The RC system has a diverse and effective leadership cohort with skillsets tailored to country needs.** DCO has taken steps to expedite RC appointments, resulting in a record low in vacancies in 2024 (10 positions, 8% of the total, versus 18% in 2023). DCO systematically consults host countries at the outset of the RC selection process to ensure that the RC profile is tailored to country needs, and the vast majority of host Governments (88%) agree that RCs have the right profile and skillsets for their country's development needs. Gender balance has been reached and the number of RCs from programme countries has increased (57% in March 2025 versus 51% in 2023). Despite positive trends, efforts to diversify the RC pool were constrained by the lack of resources. The 2024 candidate intake to the DCO and OCHA supported RC/HC talent pipeline was paused and the number of candidates for the RC assessment remained lower than planned. The injection of more predictable resources will help to course correct this, while also improving intensive and sustained coaching, training and tailored support to all RCs.
4. **The core capacities in Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) are seen as effective in supporting RCs and UN country teams (UNCTs).** They helped to identify and address bottlenecks for delivering on the SDGs, facilitate partnerships and financing, monitor progress on SDG advancement and report on UNCT results. The ongoing contributions of UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) entities to RCOs, including advisors, secondments and in-kind support, proved critical in numerous settings to strengthen the RC system's leadership and the UNCT's ability to deliver on national priorities. DCO deployment of surge capacities helped responses to sudden crises, ensuring that development advancement and coordination continued unaltered. Despite positive trends, RCOs faced significant capacity constraints due to funding shortages and staff attrition, leading to under-delivery in some areas; only 33% of RCOs were fully staffed in 2024. In addition, demand for additional advisory capacities outstripped supply during the year. Future needs include greater investment in additional integrated policy expertise, systems thinking, and SDG financing in RCOs.
5. **The Development Coordinator Office (DCO) continued to provide the backbone for RC system efforts in country, while also working to consolidate reform efforts and supporting the Chair of the UNSDG in setting the strategic direction for the UN development system and UNSDG Principals to deliver on expectations placed upon them.** Regional DCO teams continued to optimize support for RCs by operating in time zones aligned with host countries, and enhancing programming outcomes through dedicated support to RCs and regional coordination mechanisms like the Regional

Collaborative Platforms. They supported the design of Cooperation Frameworks, facilitated the provision of expertise on SDG policy, partnerships, and capacity building and supported analytical and programmatic initiatives on complex transboundary issues. They lacked, however, sufficient capacities to respond to all country-level needs, particularly in supporting coordination efforts on SDG financing and partnerships. **DCO in New York** continued to steer and oversee 1,151 core staff worldwide, ensuring diverse RC leadership and equipping RCs and UNCTs with tools and guidance for SDG acceleration. The Office worked closely with UNSDG entities to drive coherent programming and connect expertise to country needs; supported RCs and UNCTs in operationalizing system-wide strategies and intergovernmental outcomes such as the Summit of the Future; continued to advance gender parity, disability inclusion, and anti-racism within the RC system; and played a key role in supporting the UNSDG Chair through consultations with Member States on a new Funding Compact and providing information for Member States' deliberations for a new QCPR cycle. Strengthening in-house capacities for data analysis, enhancing knowledge management platforms, and better leveraging innovation and digitalization are areas requiring further strengthening.

6. **Resident Coordinators endeavored to shape the new generation of UNCTs to be more attuned to national needs and boost systems transformation for poverty eradication and SDG acceleration.** Cooperation Frameworks increasingly adopted a systems' approach for SDG acceleration, targeting system transformations defined together with Governments to maximize synergies across multiple SDGs. RCs leveraged national and global processes to foster integrated, inclusive and innovative policy responses for SDG advancement, and tailored UN support to the specific priorities of countries – whether LDCs, MICS, LLDCs, SIDS or MICs – working with host countries and UNCTs. They prioritized more inclusive UNCT configuration, enabling better access to UN entities not present in countries. And they fostered gender equality and disability inclusion across UN operations. However, UNCT configuration exercises have yet to transform country-level presence or expertise, highlighting the need to improve the way the exercise is conducted, address entity-specific operating models and incentive systems. Recalibrations of the Cooperation Framework guidance and the Management Accountability Framework are ongoing, working together with UNSDG entities.
7. **Resident Coordinators significantly strengthened strategic partnerships to unlock support, funding, and financing for SDG implementation.** UNCTs increasingly adopted joint partnership strategies as RCs convened a diverse range of partners to expand reach and attract investments. In 2024, 73% of UNCTs reported working with IFIs, funding dialogues were held in 34 countries and UN-EU dialogues in 58 countries, and country-level SDG pooled funds reached \$353M in deposits. With windows dedicated to SDG financing, policy solutions and systems transformation, and \$1.6 billion catalyzed to date in investments the Joint SDG Fund was instrumental in enabling RC leadership to orchestrate joint SDG action at scale. Yet, the share of UNCTs that successfully mobilized global pooled funding dropped to 70%, compared to 82% in previous years. The Joint SDG Fund's capitalization at \$89.8 million remained well below the annual \$500 million target in the Funding Compact and 80% of contributions are concentrated only on three donors.
8. **Resident Coordinators enabled a continued focus on sustainable development programming in complex settings,** working together with OCHA, DPPA and DPO. 87% of Governments and 87% of UNCT entities agree that RCs contributed to stronger complementarity and coherence across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. 74% of OIOS-surveyed government officials in these settings reported that the RC system helped set a national SDG agenda. However, OIOS observed that the RC system often lacked the necessary staffing and expertise, and 44% of OIOS-surveyed RCs and UNCT members noted opportunities to improve inter-agency coordination through better funding and working approaches.
9. **The RC system advanced accountability and transparency throughout 2024.** RCs continued to spearhead timely UNCT Results Reports and joint advocacy strategies linked to the Cooperation Framework, achieving 100% completion rate of UNCT Reports for the third consecutive year, 95% of UNCTs with a joint advocacy strategy. The share of implemented recommendations by audits and evaluations addressed to DCO jumped to 80% in 2024 (from 55% in 2023). Usability and accessibility of the system-wide UN Info platform was further improved. Delays in completing evaluations of Cooperation Frameworks due to limited capacities and resources, lack of a centralized approach for monitoring and managing the implementation of audits and evaluations and varying UN Info data quality remain issues that DCO is working on.
10. **The RC system has fostered efficiencies.** The transition of RC system operational services continued to generate savings, with an estimated \$6.2 million in cost avoidance recorded in 2024 (\$1.7 million higher than in 2023). The RC system also helped joint UN entities' efforts, supporting compliance with global decisions of the UNSDG Business Innovation group, and, in country, tracking implementation of Business Operations Strategies, garnering Government's support for the establishment of common premises, facilitating interagency collaboration for common back offices promoting the shift towards global shared services. Much more can be done to advance system-wide efficiencies, building on ongoing and stepped up agency efforts.

11. **Acknowledging the added value of development coordination, the General Assembly decided to provide additional funding from the regular budget (\$53M) to the RC system in 2024.** This will provide a thin, but essential base to ensure minimum support in all countries in 2025. \$100 million in voluntary contributions are still required every year. In 2024, total funding for the SPTF amounted to only \$202.1 million, leaving a gap of \$79.7 million against the full budget of \$281.8 million. DCO reduced country-level Coordination Fund allocations to 90 offices, temporary paused recruitment in RCOs covering 64 countries, scaled-back procurement and premises initiatives, and reduced travel. Ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable funding remains essential. The RC system has proven to be the lynchpin of the reformed UN development system and a launchpad for deepening reform initiatives. With development funding becoming increasingly constrained, the RC system will have an integral role in shaping a more robust and efficient response to delivering sustainable development activities and outcomes at country level.

❖ An interactive online summary of the report is available [here](#)

Summary of key statistics and feedback

The Resident Coordinator system cohort today

- 75% of current Resident Coordinators (RC) were **appointed after the reform**.
- **RC vacancies** reached a record low in 2024 (10 positions, 8% of the total, versus 18% in 2023).
- 53% of RCs were **women** by March 2025.
- 57% of RCs were from **programme countries** as of March 2025, compared to 51% in 2023 and 41% pre-reform.
- RCs hail from a wider **range of UN entities** (26 as at March 2025, compared to 24 in 2023 and 17 pre-reform). The largest group of RCs are from outside the UN (15 as at March 2025, compared to 4 pre-reform).
- 54% of **Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) staff** (national and international) were female by the end of 2024, compared to 53% in 2023, including an increase at the P5 level from 45% in 2023 to 53% in 2024.
- 53% of **international staff** were from programme countries in 2024, remaining steady from 52% in 2023.

Feedback to date

Host countries surveyed by DESA:

- 88% (vs. 81% in 2023) said that RCs have strengthened **authority**—compared to 59% in 2019, marking a 29% increase from pre-reform.
- 88% (the same as 2023) pointed to strengthened **leadership**, compared to 65% in 2019—an overall 23% jump from before the reform.
- 89% (vs. 84% in 2023) reported that RCs demonstrate greater **impartiality**, compared to 59% in 2019—a 30% increase since pre-reform.
- 85% (vs. 86% in 2023) believed that RCs have strengthened **capacity**—up from 66% in 2019, reflecting a 19% jump from before the reform.
- 89% (vs. 86% in 2023) said that RCs have improved **management skills** – a 14% increase overall from the 2019 baseline of 75%.
- 89% (vs. 88% in 2023) indicated that RCs have an increased focus on **common results**—compared to 60% in 2019, a 29% jump.
- 81% (vs. 84% in 2023) saw **reduced duplication** across UN entities—up from 56% in 2019, a 25% increase.
- 79% agreed in 2023 and 2024 that RCs helped to minimize **duplication** of efforts among UN agencies, ensuring efficient use of resources.
- 84% (vs. 82% in 2023) said the RC is a strengthened **entry point to the UN offer**—compared to 62% in 2019, reflecting a 22% jump since pre-reform.
- 88% agreed that RCs have the right **profile and skillsets** to support their country's development (91% in 2023)
- 98% reported that UN activities—as articulated in the Cooperation Framework—are closely aligned with their priorities (up from 94% in 2023).
- 98% agreed or strongly agreed that the Cooperation Framework ensured that UN activities were effectively responding to national priorities, including on the delivery of the SDGs.
- 87% indicated that UN system entities work more collaboratively together (compared to 83% in 2023).
- 89% agreed that the UN provided **integrated policy advice** (up from 88% in 2023).

- 92% confirmed that the UNCT staff have the right mix of capacities and skills to support national development.
- 87% agreed that RCs contributed to stronger synergies across development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding interventions (up from 79% and 82% respectively in 2023).
- 90% (vs. 87% in 2023) reported that the RC contributed to leveraging partnerships in support of national efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda and achieve the SDGs.
- 92% (compared to 91% in 2023) agreed that the UN helped build the country's capacity to engage in partnerships
- 76% agreed that RCs helped convene stakeholders on sustainable development financing (up from 68% in 2023) to support national Governments in their efforts to advance the SDGs.
- 83% (vs. 77% in 2023) indicated that the RC provided a report on the results achieved by the UNCT in their country—up significantly from 46% in 2020.
- 79% agreed in 2023 and 2024 that RCs helped to minimize duplication of efforts among UN agencies, ensuring efficient use of resources.
- 94% agreed that the UN was efficient in providing support to countries (up from 93% in 2023).

Contributing countries surveyed by DESA:

- 84% (vs. 83% in 2023) agreed that the RC system helped improve coherence in UN activities and in reducing the duplication of efforts.
- 90% (vs. 91% in 2023) agreed the RC system scaled up collective action for the SDGs.
- 81% (vs. 86% in 2023) said the RC system helped leverage the comparative advantages of individual UN entities.
- 85% (vs. 81% in 2023) agreed that the RC system serves as the first entry point for easy access to the UN offer/expertise across the UN system.

UNCT members surveyed by DESA:

- 89% agreed that RCs had successfully led the UNCT in providing support for changes in national policies and regulatory frameworks (84% in 2023).
- 75% agreed that RCs helped convene stakeholders on sustainable development financing to support national Governments in their efforts to advance the SDGs (68% in 2023).
- 73% agreed that the RC facilitated UNCT's focus on national opportunities for public and private investment at scale (60% in 2023).

Independent evaluations:

2024

- The evaluation of the [RC system in complex settings](#) by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), highlighted that RCs fostered a more unified UN programming approach, but noted lack of capacities to meet additional demands increasingly placed upon RCs and RCOs in these contexts and continuing to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- The UNSDG System-wide Evaluation Office (SWEO) **brief on the RC system** – a [summary](#) of 33 independent evaluations conducted between 2021 and 2024 – noted that RCs played key roles in enabling integrated UN policy advice and joint programming; facilitating engagement by smaller UNCT entities and entities without physical presence according to the SWEO summary; and supporting UNCTs to increase Governments' capacity
- Preliminary findings of the UNSDG System-wide Evaluation Office (SWEO) evaluation of **a new generation of UN Country Teams** (to be released in 2025) noted that RCs face challenges in ensuring meaningful derivation of country programming instruments from Cooperation Frameworks as entities tend to prioritize their mandates and global plans, and UNCT configuration exercises have yet to transform country-level presence or expertise
- A Joint Inspection Unit [review](#) on **the implementation of the principle of mutual recognition within the UN system** highlighted that the RC advocacy and reporting role is critical to the successful operationalization of UN entities' mutual recognition of policies, procedures, and systems contracts at the country level.

2023

- The [evaluation](#) by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of **the RC system support to enabling coherent UN policy advice** highlighted that "Resident Coordinators fulfilled their coordination role to effectively leverage expertise to enable integrated UN policy advice... The advice provided contributed to enhanced government capacity to advance progress on the SDGs, including through development of new or revised policies or policy frameworks."

2022

- The [evaluation](#) by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on **DCO regional teams** relevance and effectiveness attested to their importance in enabling RCs to fulfil their leadership and coordination role.
- The [system-wide evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund](#) noted the RCs' strategic role in enabling UNCTs to access the Fund's resources.
- The [system-wide evaluation of the UNDS socio-economic response to COVID-19](#) acknowledged the role of RCs in fostering an effective UNDS response to the pandemic.
- An independent [evaluation of UNFPA's engagement in UNDS reform](#) – a first of its kind among UNSDG entities – noted that the reformed UNDS, including independent RCs, have enabled UNFPA to position its strategic priorities and leverage joint programming for results.

2021

- The [evaluation](#) by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the **Resident Coordinator system contribution to country-level programme coherence** noted that the two-and-a-half years after the introduction of RC system reform coherence of UN country-level programming had largely been achieved through Cooperation Frameworks highly aligned with national development needs and some progress had been made on providing more integrated policy advice.