

Report on QCPR Monitoring Survey of Programme Country Governments in 2017

Final Report

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| DESA | Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| DOCO | Development Operations Coordination Office |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council |
| IMS | Information Management System |
| MAS | Management and Accountability System |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| PCG | Programme country governments |
| PIUs | Parallel Implementation Units |
| QCPR | Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review |
| RBM | Results-based Management |
| RC(s) | United Nations Resident Coordinator(s) |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SOPs | Standard Operating Procedures |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDG | United Nations Development Group |
| UNDS | United Nations development system |

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FOREWORD

To monitor the implementation of resolution 71/243 and 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), the General Assembly called on the Secretary-General to regularly assess and report on a comprehensive and quantitative basis on progress in furthering programme and operational coordination at the country level. Among other measures, it called on the SG to carry out, in cooperation with United Nations Resident Coordinators, a survey of programme country governments once every two years, on the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the United Nations (UN) system.

Accordingly, a survey of programme country governments was conducted in 2012, 2014 and 2015. Following the adoption of the 2016 QCPR, the 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (hereafter referred to as 'the survey') and the QCPR Monitoring Framework were consulted with the UN development system and Member States. The newly revised survey was carried out from 23 June 2017 to 5 September 2017.

The survey was initiated through a message from DESA to Permanent Representatives of all Member States. Follow up with programme country governments was conducted through Resident Coordinator offices. The overall response rate to the 2017 survey was 80% with responses from 118 Programme Country Governments. The credibility of the results is further enhanced in that 67% of the government respondents reported they had worked on UN coordination for five years or more.

The analysis provided in the report is primarily derived from the hard data collected through the survey. The report also benefitted substantially from the optional qualitative responses that programme country officials provided. The results of the survey are presented below, question by question. Note that not all questions were asked of all respondents. Some questions were deliberately skipped where a response was not applicable (hereafter referred to as 'skip logic'). Most questions were answered by all or nearly all of the 118 countries that responded to the survey; on some questions, some respondents may have skipped the question or answered 'Not applicable'.

To keep the survey to manageable proportions, the number of questions had to be limited. For these reasons, the survey can complement but is not a substitute for an in-depth evaluation of any individual topic. Unless otherwise stated, all tables, graphs and survey data presented in this report are sourced from the 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Programme Country Governments.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Demographics

The section below describes the demographics of the countries that responded to the survey. The survey includes data by countries' income group, geographic location and region, and other country groupings, as illustrated below.

Geographic location and region

The survey received valid responses from 119 programme country governments. These countries account for 87% of all country-level expenditures, according to 2016 financial data. The rates of regional response rates are: 91% from Eastern and Southern Africa, 88% from Western and Central Africa, 67% from Asia and the Pacific, 85% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 56% from Europe and Central Asia, and 89% from the Arab States. This response rate indicates strong coverage across the regions.

Income group

30 low-income countries participated in the 2017 survey in addition to 41 lower-middle income ones, 37 upper-middle income countries, and 11 high-income countries, based on the 2016 World Bank classification of income country groups.

As in previous years, the survey elicited solid response rate across income groups. The results are summarized in the table below, the data for each year are based on the corresponding classification for that year.¹ Overall, the participation by income groups in 2017 is conducive for drawing conclusions from the data using income group breakdowns across years.

Table 1. Respondents by income group, 2012-2017

| | 2017 | | 2015 | | 2014 | | 2012 | |
|----------------------------|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Income Group: | | | | | | | | |
| Low income | 30 | 97 | 30 | 88 | 17 | 50 | 30 | 83 |
| Low-middle income | 41 | 77 | 42 | 84 | 22 | 43 | 40 | 69 |
| Upper-middle income | 37 | 69 | 46 | 89 | 31 | 57 | 36 | 73 |
| High income | 11 | 79 | 11 | 85 | 4 | 50 | 5 | 63 |

The breakdown by percentage of survey respondents shows that low-income countries made up 25% of respondents, low middle-income countries accounted for 34% of respondents, upper middle-income countries constituted 31% of respondents. The remainder 9% refer to high-income countries.

¹ In 2016, new World Bank country classifications by income level were defined; low-income economies are those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of \$1,025 or less; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,026 and \$4,035; upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,036 and \$12,475; high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,476 or more.

Least Developed Countries & Small Island Developing States

89% of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) responded in 2017, in line with previous years and high enough to perform analysis on this group relative to others.

Table 2. LDC respondents, 2012-2017

| | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| LDCs | 89 | 83 | 46 | 71 |

74% of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) responded in 2017, in line with previous years and high enough to perform analysis on this group relative to others.

Table 3. SIDS respondents, 2012-2017

| | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| SIDS | 74 | 90 | 33 | 51 |

Delivering as One

The definition of Delivering as One, as indicated by the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO), is “countries that have formally requested the UN Development Group (UNDG) to adopt the ‘Delivering as One’ approach.” For the purpose of analysing the responses to this survey, programme country respondents are considered either to be ‘Delivering as One’ or not, and thereby labelled as ‘DaO’, or ‘non-DaO’. In 2017, there were 41 survey responses from DaO countries, making up 34% of all responses and representing a 77% response rate.

Programme size

To explore differences between countries that have large programmes and those that have relatively small programmes, the data were also disaggregated by total country-level Operational Activities for development expenditures (based on 2016 data). Countries with a large programme expenditure were any countries with over \$200 million of country-level operational activities for development; Countries considered to have a medium-sized programme expenditure were those with annual country-level expenditures of between \$50 to \$200 million; And finally, those categorized as small programme expenditure were those with annual country-level expenditures of less than \$50 million.

Respondents were asked the number of years they have been engaged coordinating UN activities, the results are summarized below:

Table 4. Number of years coordinating UN activities by respondent

| For how many years have you been engaged in coordinating UN activities in your country? | 2017 % |
|---|-----------|
| Less than one year | 5 |
| 1 or 2 years | 15 |
| 3 or 4 years | 10 |
| 5 years or more | 67 |
| Other | 3 |

Comparability with data from previous surveys

The present report provides comparison between the responses of the 2017 survey of programme country governments and those of the surveys conducted in 2012, 2014 and 2015. Such analysis was included to the degree possible, as historical and trend analysis provide useful insights.

In the case of certain questions, however, responses should be interpreted with caution, as the answer metric for some questions was adjusted in 2017. The metric adjustment implies that the options given to respondents changed from “somewhat agree/somewhat disagree” to “agree/disagree”. The responses below are marked whenever this is the case, to indicate that changes in response rates cannot be fully explained without accounting for the change in the metrics. One way of circumventing this issue is by comparing the sum of those who ‘somewhat agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ in 2015 to those who ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ in 2017. This analysis is performed in a number of questions as marked. For the rest of the questions, and unless otherwise indicated, comparisons across years are straightforward.

II. RELEVANCE

- 4. Overall, the activities of the UN and your country’s development needs and priorities are:**
- 5. Please explain briefly the key contributing factors that ensured very close alignment between the activities of the UN and your country’s development needs and priorities.**
- 6. Please mention briefly any challenges to achieving closer alignment between the activities of the UN and your country’s development needs and priorities.**
- 7. Many UN agencies receive contributions from donors for specific programmes or projects in addition to their non-earmarked (core) funds. Please indicate how aligned each type of contribution is with your country’s development needs and priorities.**
- 8. All things considered, please indicate how the relevance of the UN to your country’s development needs has changed in the past four years:**
- 9. Please suggest any measures that would make the UN more relevant in your country:**
- 10. To what extent does your country agree or disagree that the UN provides policy advice that is (i. Evidence based; ii. Provided jointly (where appropriate):**
- 11. UN presence is adequately tailored for meeting the specific challenges of the country: (Note: For the purposes of this survey, UN presence refers to the number of UN agencies present, the number and location of offices, the number and expertise of staff, etc.)**
- 12. To what extent does your country agree or disagree that UN presence is such that it:**

A. Alignment with national needs and priorities

Key Findings

- Most countries report a close alignment of UN activities with countries’ needs and priorities; and this proportion has grown since 2015;
- Non-core resources are reported as being less aligned than overall UN activities.
- The share of low income countries that report close alignment regarding non-core funding is considerably lower than the average;
- UN policy advice is generally deemed to be evidence-based and tailored to national needs and priorities, as agreed to by 93% and 86% of respondents, respectively;

- **Governments agree that UN presence is flexible and that the system operates collaboratively, while less agreement is reported in terms of cost-effectiveness.**

The survey explored the degree of alignment between the activities of the United Nations and countries' needs and priorities.

Overall, most governments report a close alignment of UN activities with countries' needs and priorities. Specifically, 85% of programme country governments reported that the UN system's activities are 'very closely' or 'closely' aligned, while 15% indicated 'somewhat aligned'. Almost all DaO countries (93%) reported very close or close alignment.

Comparing responses over time, the share of those Governments who deem activities to very closely aligned has increased considerably, as shown in table 5 below. In addition to historical data, the table also illustrates the responses from Resident Coordinators on the subject, 96% of who consider the UN system's activities to be 'closely' or 'very closely' aligned. In this way, while Governments have somewhat different perceptions than Resident Coordinators on the matter, both consider alignment to be close.

Table 5. Survey of Programme Country Governments and Survey of Resident Coordinators: closeness of alignment with the country's needs and priorities, 2012-2017

| | Programme Country Governments | | | | UN Resident Coordinators | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
| Overall, the activities of the UN and your country's development needs and priorities are: | | | | | | | | |
| Very closely aligned | 32 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 59 | 55 | 49 | 58 |
| Closely aligned | 52 | 67 | 70 | 60 | 37 | 40 | 45 | 34 |
| Somewhat aligned | 15 | 13 | 7 | 16 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| Not aligned at all | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Among the key contributing factors to ensure close alignment, Governments mentioned that it was achieved by aligning the UNDAF with national development plans or strategies, by focusing on achieving the MDGs and SDGs, by using coordination mechanisms such as Governments chairing results groups, and by effective monitoring and evaluation. It is worth noting that instituting results groups is one of the DaO Standard Operating Procedures.

In countries reporting a lack of close alignment, constraints mentioned by Governments included the absence of a national plan or strategy, insufficient availability or use of data in programming, UN staff located outside the country, fragmentation of UN activities, and misalignment of projects funded through non-core resources.

The survey asked Governments whether alignment is impacted by the source of funds, namely core and non-core. The answers suggest that non-core resources are less aligned than overall UN activities, with 57% of Governments regarding non-core funds aligned compared to 66% core funding.

Table 6. Alignment according to core or non-core funding, 2017

| Many UN agencies receive contributions from donors for specific programmes or projects in addition to their non-earmarked (core) funds. Please indicate how aligned each type of contribution is with your country's development needs and priorities: | Non-earmarked/ core funds % | Earmarked/ non-core funds % |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Very closely aligned | 10 | 7 |
| Closely aligned | 56 | 50 |
| Somewhat aligned | 25 | 29 |
| Not aligned at all | 3 | 3 |
| Don't know | 6 | 10 |

Among countries that have a humanitarian response plan, the share of Governments that indicate close alignment is considerably lower, at 33%, compared to countries overall, and to those not under a humanitarian response plan, of which 54% find close alignment. Disaggregating by income group also shows some differences. At 26%, the share of low income countries that report close alignment regarding non-core funding is considerably lower than the average. This suggests more can be done to ensure the alignment of non-core funds, particularly for low income countries,

Nearly three fourths of Governments (85%) indicate that, all things considered, the UN has become more relevant to their countries' needs over the past four years, as shown in the table below.

Table 7. Relevance of UN to country's development needs, 2017

| All things considered, please indicate how the relevance of the UN to your country's development needs has changed in the past four years: | 2017 % |
|--|-----------|
| Much more relevant | 12 |
| More relevant | 73 |
| No change | 10 |
| Less relevant | 4 |
| Much less relevant | 1 |

Over a hundred Governments provided comments on how the UN system could make itself more relevant to countries. Among the more common themes were calls for the UN to strengthen its own coordination, to fully implement DaO, and to give RCs more authority. Numerous Governments called on UN entities to work more closely with national entities, both governmental and non-governmental, at central and local levels, and to strengthen national ownership. Relatedly, Governments urged UN entities to make more use of national capacities and systems "notwithstanding the imperfections they may have", in the words of one respondent. This was in addition to calling on the UN entities to coordinate better among themselves, avoiding duplication, amongst other suggestions.

The survey explored the extent to which governments agree that the UN provides policy advice that is evidence-based, tailored to national needs and priorities, and jointly provided.² The responses suggest that UN policy advice is generally evidence-based, as indicated by the 93% of Governments who agree with this statement (see table 8 below). Nevertheless, there seems to be scope to raise the

² The survey question explained that 'jointly provided' referred to policy advice that is offered by the UNCT acting in a collective way, rather than through each agency acting individually.

proportion of countries that ‘strongly agree’—currently at 25%. In terms of advice being provided jointly by the members of the UNCT, 80% of Governments agree with the statement, although the number of countries that ‘disagree’ or that checked ‘don’t know’ is noticeably higher than in terms of whether advice is evidence-based.

Table 8. Provision of evidence-based, jointly offered policy advice

| The UN provides policy advice, tailored to national needs and priorities, that is: | Evidence-based | Provided jointly (where appropriate) |
|--|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Strongly agree | 25 | 17 |
| Agree | 68 | 63 |
| Disagree | 2 | 10 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Don’t know | 5 | 11 |

The survey asked programme country governments, as well as RCs, whether the UN presence is adequately tailored for meeting the specific challenges of the country.³ 84% of Governments and 75% of RCs agree that UN country presence is adequate tailored; while 9% of Governments and 24% of RCs disagree with this statement. This trend of responses suggests that there is room for improvement in most countries, and much room for improvement in some countries. The overall pattern of responses between RC and Governments is similar, although fewer governments ‘disagree’ that UN presence is adequately tailored. Nevertheless, this could be more a matter of client acquiescence in responding to the survey than to any real differences in views.

Table 9. UN country presence: tailoring to countries’ needs

| UN presence is “adequately tailored” | Resident Coordinators | Programme Country Governments |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 14 |
| Agree | 60 | 72 |
| Disagree | 24 | 9 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 3 |
| Don’t know | n/a | 2 |

Compared with the responses to several other questions in the survey, the percentage of Governments that ‘strongly agree’ that UN presence is adequately tailored is rather low (14%), which suggests that most countries note scope for improvement. Some governments further noted that UNCT staff “skills” need to be complemented by a good understanding of local realities. One government commented: “some [UN staff] are good, while others are still learning the country context, although they have the required skills.”

Overall, Governments agree that UN presence is flexible and that the system operates collaboratively, while less agreement is reported in terms of whether UN presence is cost-effective. As shown in the table, 86% of Governments ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that UN presence is flexible, while an equal share feel the same way about it operating collaboratively. These proportions are considerable higher (20 percentage points) than that of Governments who ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that UN

³ For the purposes of this survey, UN presence refers to the number of UN agencies present, the number and location of offices, the number and expertise of staff, etc.

presence is cost-effective (66%). Considering the data in terms of those who disagree indicates a similar pattern. The share of Governments who ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that UN presence is cost effective, at 20%, is higher than those who deem the same about it being flexible and collaborative (13% for both).

Table 10. Perceptions on UNDS’ flexibility, cost-effectiveness and ability to collaborate

| The UN presence is: | Flexible % | | Cost-effective % | | Operates collaboratively % | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | RCs | Governments | RCs | Governments | RCs | Governments |
| Strongly agree | 12 | 19 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 15 |
| Agree | 59 | 67 | 47 | 58 | 72 | 71 |
| Disagree | 26 | 12 | 38 | 18 | 10 | 12 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Don't Know | 0 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 0 | 1 |

Governments and RCs have similar views in terms of the cost-effectiveness and flexibility of the system, although Governments appear to find the system to be slightly more cost-effective and flexible than RCs do. When invited to provide optional further comments, both Governments and RC mentioned that presence should be based on a considered assessment of the country's current needs. Governments echoed some of the RCs’ comments, such as UNCT flexibility being constrained by requirements from entity HQs, including slow decision-making processes, and cost-effectiveness being compromised by high overhead costs of entity representations. The use of external consultants was another item that was judged to be not cost-effective in some cases.

One Government in the LAC region emphasized that it is “*crucial that the UN prioritises consolidating technical and professional teams in the areas of competency of each of its programmes, funds and agencies. It also needs to simplify processes and optimise its administrative areas including re-sizing the administrative staff.*”

Governments and RCs have similar views in terms of the cost-effectiveness and flexibility of the system, although governments appear to find the system to be slightly more cost-effective and flexible than RCs do. Elaborating on the latter, some RCs noted that the cost of maintaining separate entity representations, insufficient progress on business operations strategies, and entities’ presence being determined more by headquarters considerations than country needs to be among the principal causes for lack of cost-effectiveness and flexibility. All actors agree that presence should be based on a considered assessment of the country's current needs.

B. Alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- 13. Please indicate the extent to which the UN has assisted your country to:**
- 14. The UN ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society:**
- 15. Has the relevant Regional Commission provided any reports or studies that have supported your Government in its mission to implement the 2030 Agenda?**

16. How effective has your Regional Commission been in providing support on the highest priority regional/sub-regional issues of relevance to the country.

17. Please select the FIVE most important areas organised by the 17 SDGs, where the UN contribution over the past two years has been especially significant; and ii) UN assistance will be required over the next four years: (please select no more than five areas in each column).

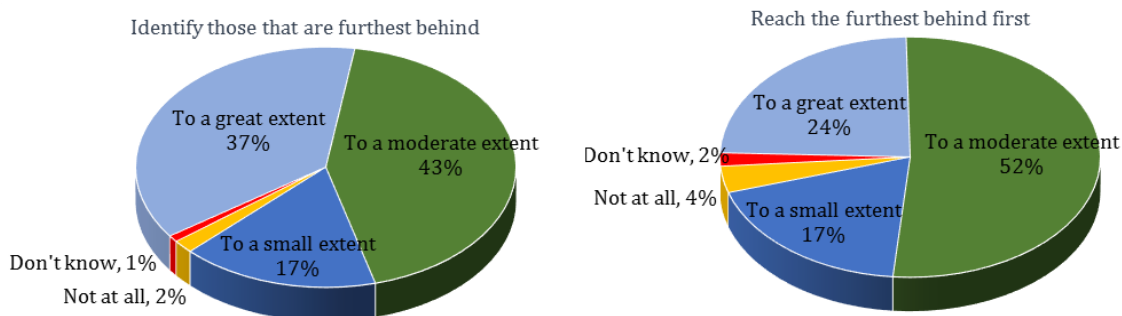
Key Findings

- The UN is successful in assisting Governments to identify the furthest behind, and to a lesser degree in helping Governments actually reach this population;
- SOPs implementation is positively associated with Governments’ approval of UN support in reaching those further behind first;
- Only 54% of countries note receiving reports and studies from Regional Commissions, suggesting room for increased awareness/availability of such studies; while only half of respondents consider support from the commissions on regional issues to be effective;
- The top five goals where the UNDS has made the most contributions over the past two years are primarily the unfinished business of the MDGs;
- Governments identified as priority areas for UN assistance over the next four years: poverty eradication, followed by health, and productive employment & sustainable economic growth.

In support of eradicating poverty, Member States set out a commitment in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. Questions 13 to 17 in the survey explored Governments’ feedback on this topic, including their views on the top areas of the UN’s contribution, as well as on specific aspects such as the support from Regional Commissions.

Over a third (37%) of programme country governments indicated that the UN system in their country already identifies those farthest behind “to a great extent”. Yet, only 24% reported that the UN system is “to a great extent” effective in *reaching* those furthest behind first. The results to these questions are illustrated in the chart below.

Figure 1. UN support in identifying & reaching those furthest behind



A few governments noted the contribution of individual entities in this context, with UNICEF and WFP being mentioned in particular. Low-income countries were more likely to express stronger agreement than countries higher up the income scale. These responses may serve as a baseline,

against which progress may be assessed over the coming years in how the UN system sharpens its focus on leaving no-one behind.

Around a quarter of all countries replied “to a small extent”, “not at all” or “don’t know” on these questions. Yet, among DaO countries, only 5% gave one of these responses on the first question and 8% on the second one, suggesting that the countries where DaO principles and practices are being applied are more likely to be “leaving no-one behind.”

LDCs report receiving the most assistance from the UNDS in identifying those furthest behind, compared to the other groups. This may reflect the fact that, overall, LDCs have greater needs in this aspect, or that the UN system has devoted more attention to this topic when working with LDCs. The finding is also in line with the breakdown by country income level, which shows an inverse relationship between country income level and the extent to which the UN is reported to have assisted the country to identify those furthest behind.

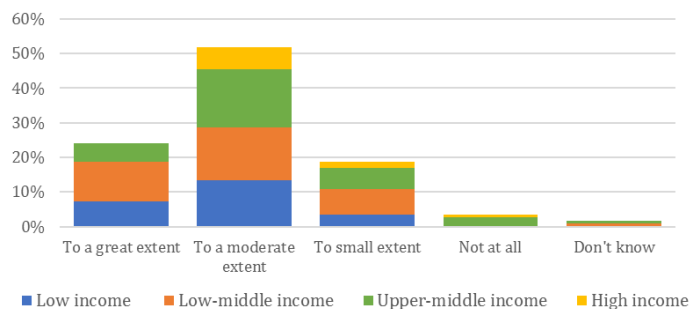
Table 11. Extent of UN support to reach those furthest behind: The perspective of LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs

| | LDCs | SIDS | LLDCs | All countries |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| To a great extent | 51 | 26 | 44 | 37 |
| To a moderate extent | 33 | 52 | 44 | 43 |
| To a small extent | 16 | 19 | 8 | 17 |
| Not at all | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Don't know | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Low income countries were more likely to respond that the UN system assisted in reaching the furthest behind first “to a great extent” than countries with higher incomes. Around a quarter of all countries replied “to a small extent”, “not at all” or “don’t know” on these questions. However, this share falls notably in countries that are further advanced in SOPs implementation.

Figure 2. UN support to reaching those furthest behind, by income groups

Question: Please indicate the extent to which the UN has assisted your country to reach the furthest behind first



The survey asked respondents about their views on whether the UN ensures that adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society. In 2017, 91% of countries agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while very few countries (7%) expressed disagreement. These figures are similar to those of the 2015 survey.⁴ Responses do not vary significantly when broken down by country income level, DaO status or other demographics.

The Governments survey inquired about the effectiveness of UN work at the regional level in terms of the support and interface with countries, including regarding the work of the Regional Commissions.

Slightly more than half (54%) of Governments noted that the Regional Commissions had provided reports or studies to support them in their mission to implement the 2030 Agenda, and 19% noted no such reports. The fact that more than a quarter (27%) of Governments indicated 'don't know' suggests the Regional Commissions could do more to improve the awareness/availability of such studies.

Table 12. Regional Commission support to Governments through studies and reports

| Has the relevant Regional Commission provided any reports or studies that have supported your Government in its mission to implement the 2030 Agenda? | 2017 % |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 54 |
| No | 19 |
| Don't know | 27 |

Half the Governments report that the Regional Commissions are effective in providing support on the highest priority regional/sub-regional issues of relevance to their country, while 7% considered this support to be 'very effective'. However, one third of governments answered 'don't know', and a further 10% reported not receiving any support. The evidence thus suggests that there is scope for improvement regarding the Regional Commissions' support to Governments on regional issues of relevance to their country.

Table 13. Effectiveness of Regional Commissions' contribution on highest priority regional/sub-regional issues

| Effectiveness of Regional Commissions' contribution on the highest priority regional/sub-regional issues of relevance to the country: | 2017 % |
|---|--------|
| Very effective | 7 |
| Effective | 50 |
| Ineffective | 2 |
| We have not received any support from the Regional Commissions | 10 |
| Don't know | 32 |

⁴ Caution should be applied when comparing the results with the 2015 survey, as, as the answer metric was adjusted in 2017 (for details, see Demographics section above). To assess the trend then, the sum of those who 'somewhat agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2015 (91%) is compared to those who 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2017 (also 91%). The share of Governments that 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement is also the same as those that 'somewhat' and 'strongly disagreed' in the 2015 survey (7%).

The Government survey asked respondents to select the five most important areas, organised by the 17 SDGs, where i) UN contribution over the *past two years* has been especially significant; and ii) UN assistance will be required over the *next four years*.

The top five goals where the UNDS has made the most contributions over the past two years are primarily the unfinished business of the MDGs. Health is identified as the topmost area according to both the 2015 and the 2017 DESA surveys. It is followed by food security, nutrition and eradicating hunger; poverty eradication; gender equality; and education—which were also among the top 10 areas in previous surveys (see figure below). No Government selected responsible consumption and production (Goal 12) as an area where the UN contribution over the past two years has been especially significant, which may reflect the lack of a natural institutional ‘home’ for this goal.

The survey also asked Governments to select the five most important areas organised by the 17 SDGs, where UN assistance will be required. Governments identified needs poverty (Goal 1), followed by health (Goal 3), productive employment and sustainable economic growth (Goal 8), combating climate change and its impacts (Goal 13), and affordable and clean energy (Goal 7). The latter five goals were not among the most mentioned areas regarding past performance. This suggests that the UN system may need to boost its capacities in the areas that go beyond the unfinished business of the MDGs.

Figure 3. Areas of greatest UN contribution

| 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments on UN operational activities for development | | | | | |
|---|----|-----|--|-----|--|
| Question: Please select the FIVE most important areas where: (please select no more than five areas in each column) | | | | | |
| UN contribution over the past two years has been especially significant in (select the top 5 areas) | | | UN assistance will be required in your country over the next four years in (select the top 5 areas) | | |
| | # | % | # | % | |
| Health and well-being (SDG3) | 69 | 59% | 65 | 56% | Poverty eradication (SDG1) |
| Food security, nutrition and eradicating hunger (SDG2) | 66 | 57% | 65 | 56% | Health and well-being (SDG3) |
| Poverty eradication (SDG1) | 62 | 53% | 61 | 53% | Productive employment and sustainable economic growth (SDG8) |
| Gender equality (SDG5) | 59 | 51% | 59 | 51% | Combating climate change and its impacts (SDG13) |
| Education (SDG4) | 58 | 50% | 47 | 41% | Education (SDG4) |
| Combating climate change and its impacts (SDG13) | 51 | 44% | 46 | 40% | Food security, nutrition and eradicating hunger (SDG2) |
| Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16) | 48 | 41% | 42 | 36% | Affordable and clean energy (SDG7) |
| Water, sanitation and hygiene (SDG6) | 34 | 29% | 41 | 35% | Water, sanitation and hygiene (SDG6) |
| Reducing inequalities (SDG10) | 27 | 23% | 39 | 34% | Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG9) |
| Convening and leveraging partnership for the goals (SDG17) | 22 | 19% | 32 | 28% | Gender equality (SDG5) |
| Productive employment and sustainable economic growth (SDG8) | 20 | 17% | 32 | 28% | Convening and leveraging partnership for the goals (SDG17) |
| Sustainable use of land, ecosystems and forests (SDG15) | 14 | 12% | 30 | 26% | Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16) |
| Affordable and clean energy (SDG7) | 13 | 11% | 24 | 21% | Reducing inequalities (SDG10) |
| Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG9) | 6 | 5% | 24 | 21% | Sustainable cities and communities (SDG11) |
| Sustainable cities and communities (SDG11) | 6 | 5% | 14 | 12% | Sustainable use of land, ecosystems and forests (SDG15) |
| Sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG14) | 6 | 5% | 12 | 10% | Responsible consumption and production (SDG12) |
| Responsible consumption and production (SDG12) | 0 | 0% | 12 | 10% | Sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG14) |

C. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

18. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), or equivalent UN planning framework, has enabled the Government to ensure that the UN's activities are closely aligned with your national plans and strategies including on the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals:

19. Is there a joint Government or national/UN Steering Committee (or similar body) that oversees the UNDAF (or equivalent planning framework)?

20. The government's participation in the Steering Committee has allowed the Government to exercise leadership over the UN programmes.

21. In facilitating the participation of the following actors during the development of the UNDAF, the UN is:

22. There has been an improved focus on common results among UN agencies in the last year:

23. Compared to four years ago, the UN system currently works together

Key Findings

- Nearly all countries find the UNDAF to be helpful in ensuring close alignment with national plans and strategies; alignment, however, appears to be less positive at the implementation stage;
- Most Governments note that participating in Steering Committees allows them to exercise leadership over UN programmes. Currently, 77% of respondents report a joint Government or national/UN Steering Committee overseeing the UNDAF;
- Governments appreciate the UN's role in facilitating the participation of civil society and bilateral and multilateral actors in the development of the UNDAF; less effective is the facilitation of other actors—namely parliamentarians, international financial institutions, and the private sector stakeholders ;
- Most Governments find that there has been an improved focus on common results among UN agencies in the last year; attributed, among others, to DaO, a UN House, or linked to a specific project/programme.

The UNDAF is an instrument for joint planning of UN agencies at the country level. Other similar UN planning tools include One Plan/One Programme formats and “integrated strategic frameworks” in countries in transition from relief to development. Questions 18 through 23 in the survey inquired about aspects related to the UNDAF, and the degree to which the system is working collaboratively.

Over 90% of programme country governments “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the UNDAF helped to ensure that UN activities are closely aligned with national plans and strategies including on the delivery of the SDGs. A number of governments provided optional comments, observing that alignment is less positive at the UNDAF implementation stage; for example in terms of lack of monitoring and evaluation. One government specifically mentioned that their UNDAF would be revised in the light of the SDGs.

Table 14. UNDAF contribution to alignment of UN work with national priorities, 2017

| The UNDAF has enabled the Government to ensure that the UN's activities are closely aligned with your country's priorities | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 34 | 53 | 56 | 53 |
| Agree | 57 | 39 | 39 | 38 |
| Disagree | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Not applicable | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |

In terms of comparisons over time, the figure for 'strongly agree' in 2017 is substantially lower than the corresponding figure obtained in previous years, while the share of Governments who 'agree' is considerably higher. This may be attributed to the change in the metrics in the 2017 survey, where the 'somewhat agree' category was replaced with 'agree'.⁵ If both categories of agreement are aggregated per year, the trend is in line with previous years (91% in 2017, compared with 92% in 2015, 95% in 2014 and 91% in 2012).

Focusing on 2017, the breakdown by country income level, DaO status, and country typology provides some additional details. The proportion of low income countries that "strongly agreed", at 43%, that UNDAFs help Governments ensure alignment between UN activities and national priorities was higher than the average for all countries (i.e. 34%). At 46%, the figure for DaO countries was also higher than that for all countries. On the other hand, while SIDS were less likely than LDCs and LLDCs to agree that the UNDAF can help to ensure alignment, 84% of SIDS either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the UNDAF has enabled the Government to ensure that the UN's activities are closely aligned with national plans and strategies, including on the delivery of the SDGs.

There is scope to do better in regard to ensuring national ownership and leadership of UN system activities. Mechanisms such as joint steering committees and annual reviews are deemed 'good practices', they are included among the SOPs, and for many countries they are integral aspects of national ownership.

The functioning of joint steering committees to oversee the preparation and implementation of the UNDAF, and the holding of annual UNDAF reviews are signs of strong national ownership. In this sense, over three fourths (77%) of Governments noted the presence of a joint Government or national/UN Steering Committee that oversees the preparation and implementation of the UNDAF,

According to the UNDG IMS, 50% of countries have a steering committee chaired by the government. Of these, 38% conducted a review in the last 12 months.

Encouragingly, the majority of Governments (92%) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that their participation in Steering Committees allows them to exercise leadership over UN programmes, as suggested by the survey results.

The UN can play a fundamental role in facilitating the participation of diverse actors in the development of the UNDAF. Eighty-six percent of Governments note that the UN is 'effective' or 'very effective' in facilitating the participation of civil society in the development of the UNDAF, and 76%

⁵ Previously, countries that agreed more than 'somewhat agree' had to opt for 'strongly agree', while now they have the option to simply choose 'agree'. See details in *Demographics* section.

deem the same for bilateral and multilateral actors. The perceived degree of facilitation for other stakeholders, however, is lower or unknown to the government. Only slightly more than half note that the UN was ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’ in facilitating the participation of parliamentarians, international financial institutions, and the private sector (54%, 56% and 53%, respectively) during the development of the UNDAF. The responses from RCs on a similar question suggest a similar trend, albeit with a slightly more positive take. Overall, the responses to the survey suggest that there is room to increase engagement with the private sector, parliamentarians, and based on governments’ views, with international financial institutions.

**Table 15 Facilitation of the participation of different actors in the UNDAF:
View from Governments**

| | Very effective % | Effective % | Ineffective % | Very ineffective % | Don't know % |
|---|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Parliamentarians | 8 | 46 | 19 | 3 | 24 |
| Civil Society | 23 | 63 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| International Financial Institutions | 6 | 50 | 17 | 2 | 25 |
| Bilateral and Multi-lateral actors | 14 | 62 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| The private sector | 6 | 47 | 18 | 2 | 28 |

**Table 16. Extent of UNCT consultation with different actors in development of the UNDAF:
View from RCs**

| | To a great extent % | To a moderate extent % | To a small extent % | Not at all % | Don't know % |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Parliamentarians | 29 | 31 | 24 | 15 | 2 |
| Civil Society | 61 | 27 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| International Financial Institutions | 36 | 44 | 12 | 7 | 1 |
| Bilateral and Multi-lateral actors | 47 | 41 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| The private sector | 19 | 35 | 25 | 20 | 1 |

The survey also inquired about common results. In this sense, 85% of Governments ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that there is an improved focus on common results among UN agencies in the last year. More specifically, 69% of Governments ‘agree’ with the statement, while 16% ‘strongly agree’. This mostly favourable view is echoed by RCs, who express even greater agreement. There is no data available for a trend analysis as this is a new question to the survey. In the optional comments, Governments mentioned that the improvement in focus was linked to a specific project or programme, or attributed to DaO, or to a UN House.

The survey asked Governments about the way that the UN system is working together, compared with the situation four years ago. Nearly three fourths (74%) of Governments noted that the system is indeed working ‘more’ or ‘much more collaboratively’ than four years ago. More specifically, 54% of Governments observe that the system is working ‘more’ collaboratively and 18% that it is working ‘much more collaboratively’. However, roughly one-fifth of Governments (21%) indicated that the

system is working ‘neither more nor less collaboratively’ and 6% that it is actually working less collaboratively; all of which suggests remaining scope for action.

III. EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness refers to the degree to which a programme or project actually achieves the intended results or outcomes. Questions 24 to 35, explore effectiveness in terms of the UN’s contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the development of national capacities.

A. UN Contribution to development

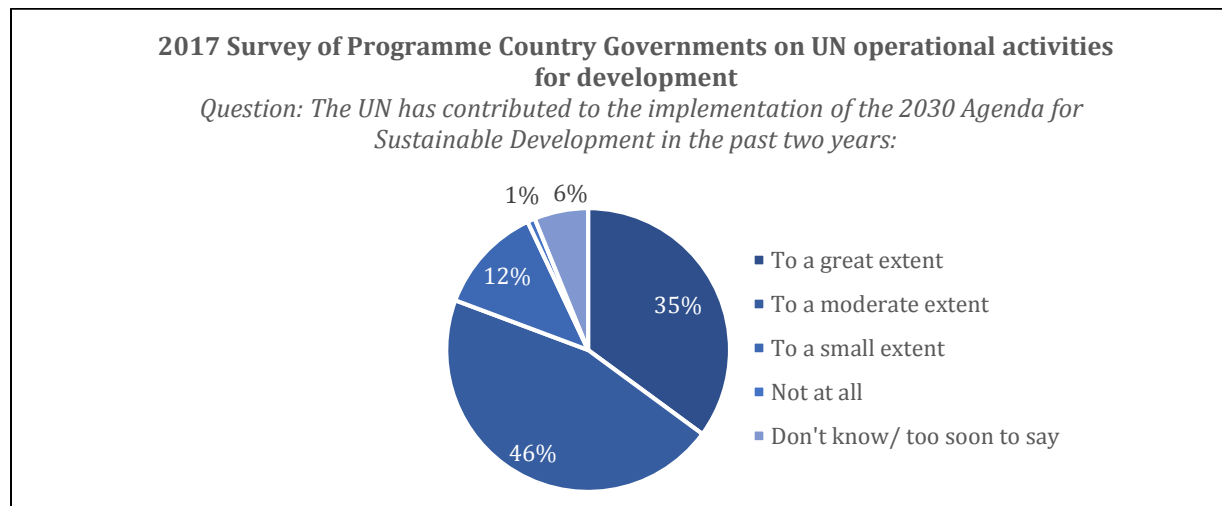
24. The UN has contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the past two years:
25. Did your country present a Voluntary National Review (on implementation of the SDGs) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) that took place in the previous calendar year?

Key Findings

- Over 80% of Governments believe that the UN has contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- Many Governments are requesting support from the UNDS in preparing a Voluntary National Review. Of 40 responding countries to the survey stating that they had presented such a review, 35 reported UNCTs having supported the VNR preparation.

The survey asked Programme countries about the extent of support received from the UN system with regards to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development over the past two years. As shown in the figure below, 81% of Governments believe that the UN has ‘moderately’ or ‘greatly’ contributed to the implementation of the Agenda

Figure 4. UN support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda



The survey asked Programme countries whether they presented a Voluntary National Review on implementation of the SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) that took place in the previous calendar year. Altogether, 40 countries reported having prepared a National Voluntary Review, 35 of which had received UN support. More countries mentioned that such a review was underway. Cross checking the responses with the countries that presented show that some respondents may have misinterpreted the phrasing of the question and answered for the current calendar year. That said, the data shows that of those that did present a VNR, the UN assists with the preparation.

B. Developing national capacities

- 26. All things considered, the UN has been effective in developing national capacities.*
- 27. Please mention briefly the key contributing factors that have enabled the UN to be effective in developing national capacities:*
- 28. Please mention briefly any measures you would recommend the UN to take to be more effective in developing national capacities.*
- 29. The UN system uses national systems wherever possible:*
- 30. To what extent does your country agree or disagree that the UN has used each of the following as much as possible:*
- 31. Compared to four years ago, how closely have UN agencies worked together to support capacity-building on disaggregated data collection and analysis.*
- 32. The UN has contributed to the strengthening of national capacities in:*
- 33. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) engages as much as possible with:*
- 34. Has your country graduated in the last four years or has your country been scheduled to graduate from LDC status in the last three years?*
- 35. The UN has provided effective support in the formulation of your country's national transition strategy:*

Key Findings

- Respondents identified the involvement of the government in planning and implementation processes, and the alignment of the UNDAF with national priorities as contributing factors of the UN's effectiveness in the development of national capacities;
- Suggestions to improve effectiveness include conducting thorough needs analyses; more comprehensive approaches; stronger national involvement, and improved coordination among UN entities;
- There is room for improvement in ensuring that the use of national capacities and systems is the UN's default approach in implementing activities as the country level;
- The areas of procurement, financial systems, monitoring & reporting, and evaluation appear as particular opportunity areas to increase the use of national capacities;
- The share of governments who agree that UN entities are working closely together in support for capacity building on data collection and analysis is relatively low (66%); while nearly a third of governments fail to note any change over the past four years;
- Most governments agree that the UN has contributed overall to strengthen national capacities regarding planning; less so in terms of management and evaluation;
- Most governments see scope for the UN to be more active in engaging with different partners, particularly with the private sector;

- **The effectiveness of UN support in the formulation of national transition strategies is viewed as broadly positive by LDCs.**

When asked if the UN system has been effective in developing national capacities, most governments agreed. As shown in the table below, these findings mirror the corresponding results in previous surveys.⁶

Table 17. UN effectiveness in developing national capacities, 2012-2017

| UN has been effective in developing national capacities: | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Strongly agree | 18 | 21 | 31 | 24 |
| Agree | 71 | 65 | 59 | 68 |
| Disagree | 10 | 11 | 8 | 6 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

The survey provided Governments with the opportunity to mention any factors that they thought had particularly contributed to the UN's effectiveness in strengthening national capacities. In response, Governments highlighted the following factors as contributing to the UN's effectiveness: extensive involvement of the government and other stakeholders in planning and implementation processes, holding frequent training and workshops, and aligning of the UNDAF with the national plan in order to line up priorities.

Governments were also invited to recommend measures that the UN system could take to improve its effectiveness with respect to capacity development. The suggestions from programme country governments include the following: a more thorough analysis of needs; designing more comprehensive approaches; a stronger national ownership and involvement of national partners, including those at the sub-national level; as well as improved coordination among UN entities. Some Governments also advocated for overseas study-tours, though one Government cautioned that not all training *outside* the country is relevant to countries' needs.

The DESA survey of Governments regularly asks about the use of national capacities. Altogether, 78% governments agree that the UNDS has been effective in developing national capacities. This figure is broken down into 19% of governments who 'strongly agree', and 59% who 'agree' that the UN system uses national systems wherever possible. The relatively low share of those who 'strongly agree' in addition to the 17% of Governments who disagree with this statement suggest that there is still room to ensure that the use of national capacities and systems is the default approach of UN entities when it comes to implementing activities at the country level.

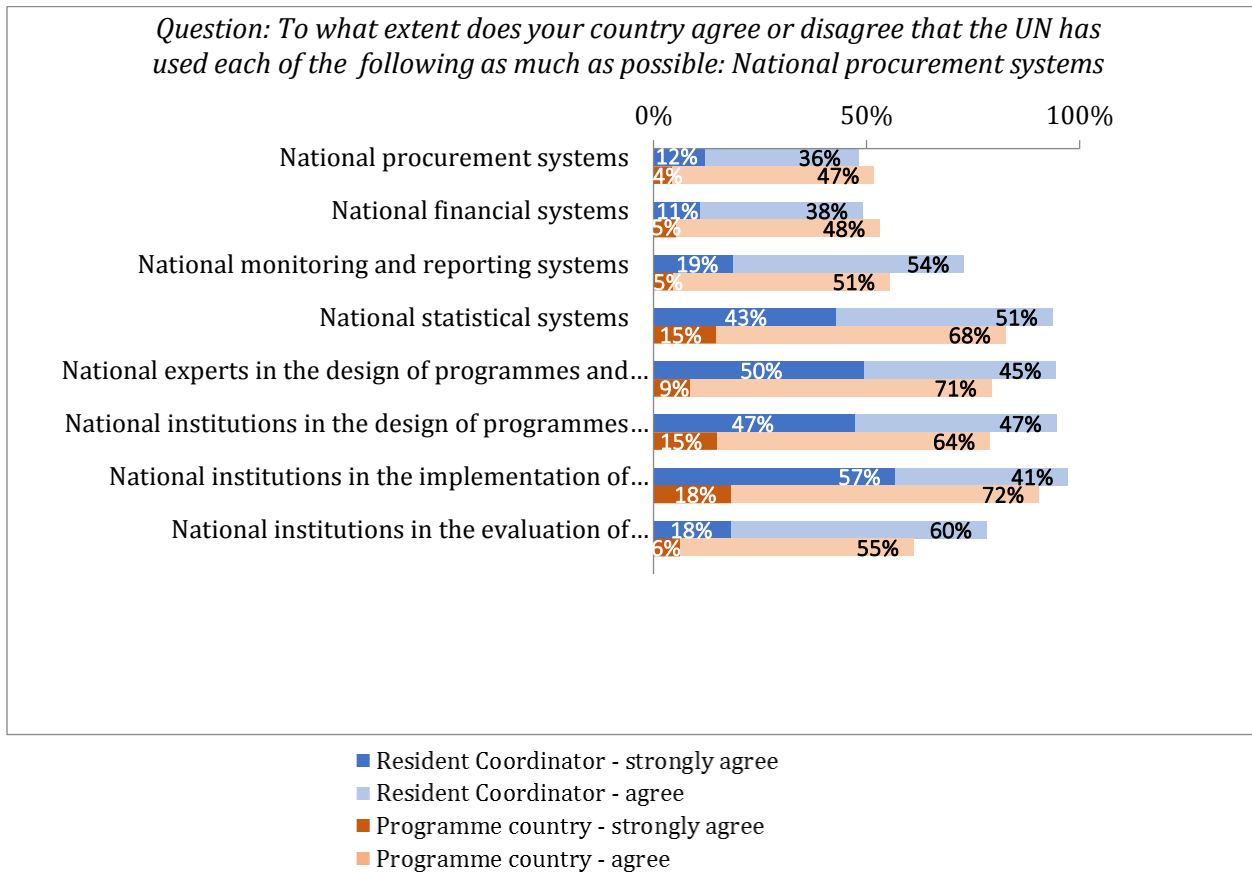
Table 18. Use of national capacities

| The UN system uses national systems wherever possible: | 2017 % |
|--|-----------|
| Strongly agree | 19 |
| Agree | 59 |
| Disagree | 17 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 |
| Don't know | 3 |

⁶ Caution, however, is advised in interpreting the historical trend, given the change in metric in the 2017 survey. See details in *Demographics* section, above.

The survey asked both RCs and Governments their views on whether the UN is using specific national capacities as much as possible. As shown in the figure below, few governments ‘strongly agreed’ that the UN uses national capacities as much as possible, compared with nearly half of RCs who ‘strongly agreed’. In other areas such as procurement, financial systems, monitoring and reporting, and evaluation, there was even less agreement that national capacities were being used as much as possible. There is clear scope for improvement, which could be facilitated by a more coordinated approach on the UN side.

Figure 5. UNDS’ utilization of national systems and institutions



A third of Governments disagree that the UN is using national procurement systems, financial systems, and monitoring & reporting as much as possible (34%, 37%, and 36%, respectively). The use of national institutions in the evaluation of programmes and projects also presents particular room for improvement, at 32% of disagreement from Governments, on whether they are used as much as possible. See Table X for the full breakdown.

Table 19. Extent of agreement with UNDS' utilization of national systems and institutions

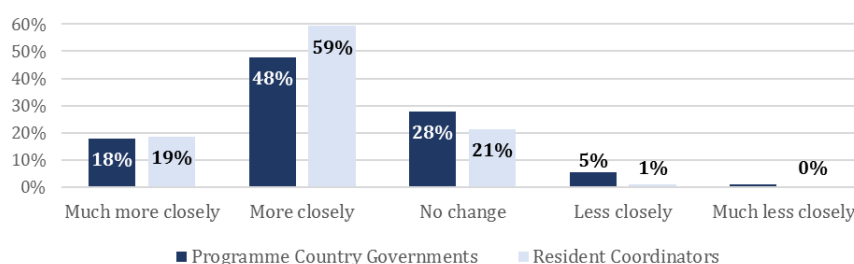
| To what extent does your country agree or disagree that the UN has used each of the following as much as possible | Strongly agree % | Agree % | Disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % |
|---|------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|--------------|
| National procurement systems | 4 | 47 | 31 | 4 | 13 |
| National financial systems | 5 | 48 | 32 | 5 | 10 |
| National monitoring and reporting systems | 5 | 51 | 32 | 4 | 9 |
| National statistical systems | 15 | 68 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| National experts in the design of programmes and projects | 9 | 71 | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| National institutions in the design of programmes and projects | 15 | 64 | 15 | 3 | 4 |
| National institutions in the implementation of programmes and projects | 18 | 72 | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| National institutions in the evaluation of programmes and projects | 6 | 55 | 27 | 5 | 6 |

Given the high priority assigned to improving data collection and analysis in the 2030 Agenda—particularly regarding vulnerable groups and others in danger of being “left behind”—additional questions were included in the survey of Governments on this topic. One question explored the extent to which UN agencies were seen to be working together in support for capacity building on disaggregated data collection and analysis, as compared to four years ago.

The share of governments who agree that UN entities are working more or much more closely together remains low (66%); particularly compared to the share of RCs who agree with the statement (at 78%). Furthermore, the fact that 28% of governments fail to note any change over the past four years provides further evidence that more remains to be done in many countries.

Figure 6. Collaboration towards capacity building around data

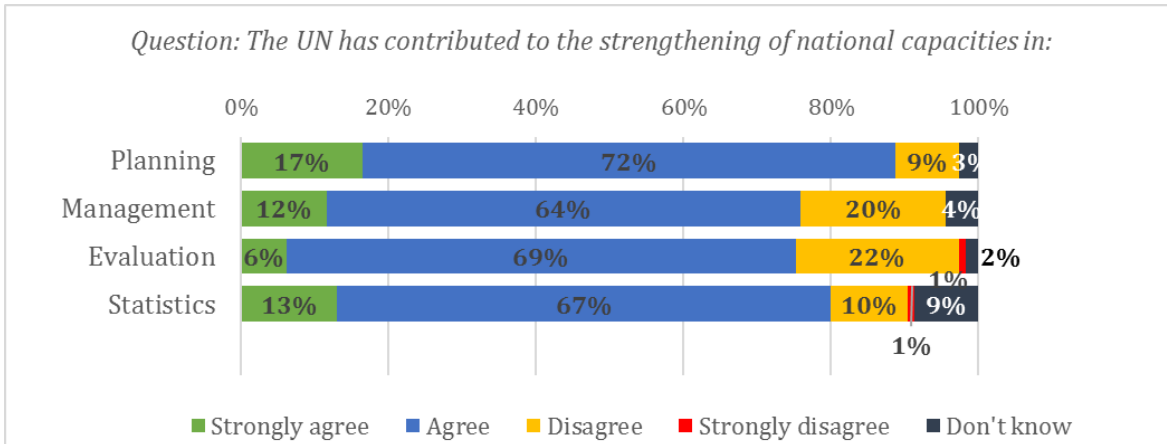
Question: Compared to four years ago, how closely have UN agencies worked together to support capacity-building on disaggregated data collection and analysis:



Another question asked about support to the development of national capacities across four areas: planning, management, evaluation and statistics. Most governments agree that the UN has contributed overall to strengthen national capacities regarding planning, management, evaluation and statistics, as shown in figure 7 below. The UNDS support to strengthening national capacities is particularly strong in the area of ‘planning’, but less so regarding ‘management’ and ‘evaluation’. At the same time, 20% of governments disagreed that the UN has contributed to strengthen national

capacities in management, and similarly 22% in evaluation. Also notable is the relatively low share of countries who ‘strongly agreed’ on any of these topics. This finding tends to support the contention that using capacities is a significant aspect of strengthening capacities.

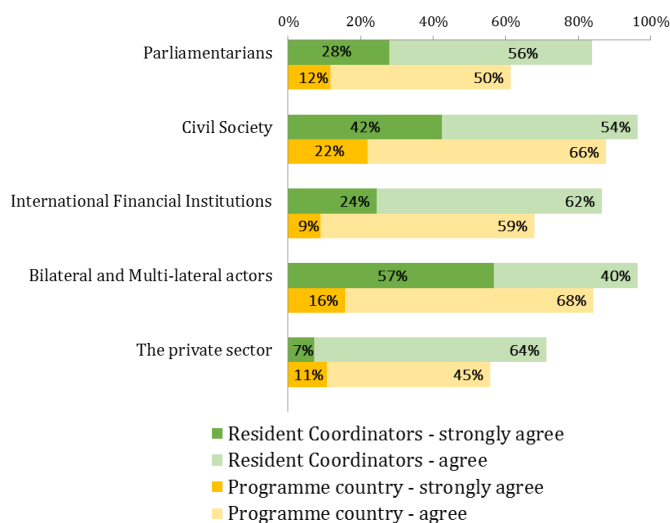
Figure 7 – Strengthening National Capacities



A question in both the programme country survey and the RC survey asked respondents about their views on whether the UNCT engages “as much as possible” with five different categories of partners. The responses suggest that programme country governments consider UN involvement with each type of partner as somewhat less extensive than what is observed by RCs. The exception is the private sector, where the views of Governments and RCs appear quite similar. While the differences in perceptions could be partly due to lack of information on the part of governments, the results suggest that most governments see scope for the UN to be more active or ‘much more’ active in engaging with all of these partners.

Figure 8. UNCT engagement in partnerships

Question: The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) engages as much as possible with:



Source: DESA 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments and DESA 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The 2016 QCPR requested the UNDS to improve its support to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies. In order to inquire about the effectiveness of UN support in the formulation of national strategies, the survey first identified countries that had graduated in the last four years or that had been scheduled to graduate from LDC status in the last three years. The responses indicate that the survey includes six countries that had graduated (or scheduled to graduate) from LDC status in the last four years.

The evidence from the survey suggests that the effectiveness of UN support in the formulation of national transition strategies is broadly positive. The survey asked about the view of Governments on the support received from the UN in formulating a national transition strategy: two countries 'strongly agreed' that the support had been effective, three 'agreed', and one 'disagreed'.

C. Strengthening complementarity among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts

36. Please indicate which areas of activity apply in your location:

37. Among the areas selected in the previous question, please assess the level of collaboration among the UN agencies engaged in more than one area:

38. Has your country had to address a situation with humanitarian consequences in the past four years?

39. The Resident Coordinator (and humanitarian coordinator where there is one) has prepared a joint (humanitarian and development) impartial, comprehensive assessment of needs to inform strategic decisions:

Key Findings

- **Most Governments report close collaboration between UN agencies across the development, disaster risk-reduction, humanitarian action, and sustaining peace pillars;**
- **Governments noted that strong leadership by the RC has helped to facilitate better cross-sectoral coordination among UN entities, while the UNDAF was also reported as an important planning instrument in this regard;**
- **Over half of Governments indicated that their country had needed to address a situation with humanitarian consequences in the past four years;**
- **Governments' suggestions to improve effectiveness include: closer coordination by the UN with government counterparts, better division of labor among UN entities, and the presence of an integrated reporting system for all UN activity in the country;**
- **Only 41% of Governments reported having received a joint humanitarian and development needs assessment from the RC to inform strategic decisions, suggesting room for the increased availability of such studies.**

The QCPR specifies that a comprehensive whole of system, response including greater cooperation and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, is fundamental to addressing needs effectively and attaining the SDGs. Questions 36 to 39 explore the level of collaboration and engagement at country level across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.

Governments were asked to indicate the sectors in which the UN has operational activities in-country, namely: development, disaster risk-reduction, humanitarian action, and/or sustaining peace. The responses to this question are shown below.

Table 20. Focus area of UN activities

| Please indicate which areas of activity apply in your location: | 2017 % |
|---|-----------|
| Development | 92 |
| Disaster risk reduction | 66 |
| Humanitarian action | 39 |
| Sustaining peace | 32 |

A major theme in the QCPR is that of ensuring a comprehensive whole-of-system response across UN pillars. This question explored the perceptions of governments on how closely UN agencies work together across the development, disaster risk-reduction, humanitarian action, and sustaining peace pillars. Overall, 67% of programme country governments reported that there was close collaboration between UN agencies across sectors, while 18% reported very close collaboration. On the other hand, 11% of programme country governments indicated that there was no close collaboration between UN agencies across sectors. In response to a separate question on the factors that led to close collaboration between UN entities, several Governments noted that the UNDAF served as an important planning instrument in this regard. According to Government respondents, strong leadership by the RC facilitated better cross-sectoral coordination among UN entities.

Over half (54%) of Governments indicated that their country had needed to address a situation with humanitarian consequences in the past four years.⁷ Of the countries that responded in the affirmative, several Governments noted that the UN could improve its effectiveness in country by more closely consulting and coordinating with their relevant Government counterparts. Many Governments also noted that there was duplication of activities among UN entities and recommended a clear division of labor among UN agencies. It was also suggested that UN coordination could be improved through an integrated reporting system for all UN activities in country.

Table 21. Addressing situations of humanitarian emergencies

| Has your country had to address a situation with humanitarian consequences in the past four years? | Responses | 2017 % |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 59 | 54 |
| No | 44 | 40 |
| Don't know | 8 | 7 |

Programme country governments were asked to indicate whether the RC prepared a joint (humanitarian and development) impartial, comprehensive assessment of needs to inform strategic decisions. While 54% of Governments had noted the need to address a situation with humanitarian consequences, only 41% indicated the availability of comprehensive joint assessment to inform

⁷ This question is a self-assessment of whether a humanitarian emergency has taken place. Countries that have had to address a humanitarian emergency may have experience with some of the following: i) a Humanitarian/Regional Response Plan ii) a Flash Appeal iii) a Refugee Response Plan iv) designation/appointment of a UN Humanitarian Coordinator accredited to the Government, or, iv) significant humanitarian assistance activities)

strategic decisions. Such assessment did not take place in 9% of cases, while 50% of Governments indicated ‘don’t know’ or ‘not applicable.’ In the optional comments, one country with a significant humanitarian emergency indicated that the UNCT prepared a Crisis Response Plan but reported that it was not coupled with a development plan.

Table 22. Assessment of joint needs prepared by the RC

| The Resident Coordinator (and humanitarian coordinator where there is one) has prepared a joint (humanitarian and development) impartial, comprehensive assessment of needs to inform strategic decisions: | 2017 % |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 41 |
| No | 9 |
| Don't know | 28 |
| Not applicable in our country | 22 |

D. Leadership

- 40. The Resident Coordinator effectively leads the UN country team’s strategic support for national plans and priorities:*
- 41. UN staff have the right mix of capacities and skills to support your country’s development:*
- 42. The UN country team (heads of agencies) has the highest standards of leadership skills:*
- 43. To what extent has the Resident Coordinator demonstrated the following skills:*
- 44. The Resident Coordinator has sufficient prerogative to effectively fulfill her/his mandate:*
- 45. The Resident Coordinator helps to minimize duplication of efforts among UN agencies, ensuring the efficient use of resources:*
- 46. How does your government access the technical expertise of nonresident agencies (NRAs):*
- 47. In general, how easy is it to access technical expertise from UN agencies, including non-resident agencies (NRAs):*
- 48. Has the Resident Coordinator in your country completed his/her tenure (assignment) in the past two years?*
- 49. Was your country duly informed when the tenure (assignment) of their out-going Resident Coordinator was coming to an end?*

Key Findings

- Most Governments agree that RCs effectively lead the UNCT’s support towards national plans and priorities in their countries;
- Three-fourths of Governments observe that UN staff has the right mix of capacities and skills to support their country’s development (though only 14% are in ‘strong agreement’). There has been no significant change in this trend over the past two years;
- Governments’ expressed strong endorsement of RCs’ impartiality and management skills;
- Governments’ assess that RCs have more prerogative to effectively lead the UNCT than what is observed by RCs themselves— though the Governments’ appraisal is based on “external” manifestations and not strictly comparable to RCs’ own assessment;

- **In the view of Governments, there is room to improve RCs ability to help minimize duplication of efforts among UN agencies to ensure the efficient use of resources;**
- **While two-thirds of Governments found that, in general, it was easy to access technical expertise from UN agencies, a non-trivial share (18%) found it difficult, suggesting scope for improvement remains.**

Questions 40 to 49 inquired about Governments' views on the UN Resident Coordinator's leadership, as well as regarding staff's composition of capacities and skills.

The 2017 survey asked programme country governments about their views on whether the RC effectively led the UNCT's support towards national plans and priorities in their country. Overall, 92 percent of Governments 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement.

Table 23. RCs' leadership of UNCT support towards national priorities

| The Resident Coordinator effectively leads the UN country team's strategic support for national plans and priorities: | 2017 % |
|--|---------------|
| Strongly agree | 30 |
| Agree | 62 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 |
| Don't know | 2 |

The 2030 Agenda requires a new generation of UN country teams with a configuration in terms of composition, skillsets, functions and focus that is fit to deliver on the unique and increasingly diverse needs of countries.

The survey of programme country governments suggests that there is room for further improvement in terms of staff's capacities and skills. Overall, 76% of Governments agreed that UN staff have the right mix of capacities and skills to support their country's development. Yet, breaking this figure down it is possible to see that while 62% of Governments 'agree' with the statement, just 14% expressed 'strong agreement' in this regard (see table below).

Table 24. Presence of UN capacities and skills to support countries' development

| UN has the right mix of capacities and skills to support your country's development: | 2017 % |
|---|---------------|
| Strongly agree | 14 |
| Agree | 62 |
| Disagree | 13 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 |
| Don't know | 10 |

Given the adjustment in metrics discussed in the Demographics section above⁸, comparing 2017 responses with those of 2015 must be interpreted with caution. One way of doing is comparing the *sum* of those who 'somewhat agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2015 to those who 'agreed' and 'strongly

⁸ As discussed, the metric adjustment implies that the options given to respondents changed from "somewhat agree/somewhat disagree" in 2015, to "agree/disagree" in 2017.

agreed' in 2017. That is, in 2017, 76% of Governments agreed that UN staff have the right mix of capacities and skills to support their country's development compared with 74% of Governments in 2015, which suggests no significant change over the past two years. Caution must also be exercised, however, given that questions were worded somewhat differently.⁹

Specifically, in terms of leaderships skills, most Governments (85%) agree that UNCTs (heads of agencies) have the highest standards. This suggests a modestly more positive view than whether UN staff have the right mix of capacities and skills, which 76% of Governments agreed with.

Governments' expressed strong endorsement of RCs' skills. About 88% of Governments observe the RC demonstrates impartiality 'effectively' or 'very effectively', while 85% deem the same regarding management skills. Roughly a third deem that RCs demonstrate these traits 'very effectively' (34% of Governments in terms of impartiality, 32% regarding management skills)—a relatively high share compared with strong agreement in other questions. Overall, the responses suggest a relatively strong endorsement of the statement. No doubt, however, they also indicate some room for improvement.

Table 25. RCs impartiality and management skills

| To what extent has the Resident Coordinator demonstrated the following skills: | Very effectively % | Effectively % | Ineffectively % | Very ineffectively % | Don't know % |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Impartiality | 34 | 54 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Management skills | 32 | 53 | 7 | 1 | 7 |

One of the most frequently cited challenges to the RC system, including in 71/243, is a lack of authority, capacity and prerogative on behalf of the RC to effectively lead the UNCT – both in terms of human and financial resources – and deliver on the UNDAF. This view is shared by RCs and Governments alike.

RCs consistently report that they have limited capacity and prerogative to avoid duplication of efforts in the UNCT and effectively fulfil their mandate. The perception of Governments of RCs' prerogative is more positive, as shown in the table below. It is worth noting, however, that Governments' experience tends to be more limited to "external" manifestations of RCs' prerogative, and thus is not strictly comparable to the RCs' own assessment.

Table 26. RC prerogative, 2017

| The Resident Coordinator has sufficient prerogative to effectively fulfil her/his mandate: | % Governments | % RCs |
|--|------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 27 | 15 |
| Agree | 56 | 34 |
| Disagree | 8 | 33 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 16 |
| Don't know | 9 | 2 |

⁹ The question in the 2015 survey referred specifically to the UNCT "having the technical capacities and leadership skills", while this one is more generally about "UN staff". For this reason, in addition to the change in categories, caution must be taken in inferring trends.

In terms of whether RCs help minimize duplication of efforts among UN agencies to ensure an efficient use of resources, three-fourths (76%) of Governments agreed or 'strongly agreed'. A further breakdown indicates that while 60% of Governments 'agree' that RCs help minimize duplication of efforts, only 16% 'strongly agree'; and a further 12% of Governments disagree with this statement. In this sense, while positive, the responses also suggest important room for action to minimize duplication of efforts. Two governments commented that the RC's room for manoeuvre on the subject was limited or non-existent.

Half of the Governments noted that the RC in their country completed his/her tenure (or assignment) in the past two years; while 40% reported that he/she had not. A non-trivial share (11%) noted 'don't know'. On the other hand, most Governments (93%) noted being duly informed when the tenure (assignment) of their out-going RC was coming to an end. Only 2% reported not being informed, while 5% indicated 'don't know'.

Table 27. RC's ability to minimize duplication

| The Resident Coordinator helps to minimize duplication of efforts among UN agencies, ensuring the efficient use of resources: | 2017 % |
|--|---------------|
| Strongly agree | 16 |
| Agree | 60 |
| Disagree | 12 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 |
| Don't know | 11 |

The 2017 survey included questions on accessing the technical expertise of agencies. Specifically, in terms of accessing the technical expertise of non-resident agencies (NRAs), Governments typically go either through the RC or directly through the relevant UN agency headquarters and/or regional office (see table 28 below). Some governments further commented that access was sometimes through the RC and sometimes directly with the agency. Two governments added that they sometimes use their diplomatic channels to contact an NRA. Notably, no Government reported being unable to access the expertise of the NRAs.

Table 28. Access to non-resident agencies' technical expertise

| How does your government access the technical expertise of non-resident agencies (NRAs): | 2017 % |
|---|---------------|
| Through the Resident Coordinator | 43 |
| Directly from the relevant UN agency headquarters and/or regional office | 34 |
| We have not tried to access the expertise of non-resident agencies | 17 |
| We tried but were unable to access the expertise of the non-resident agencies | 0 |

Governments were also asked about the ease to access technical expertise from UN agencies in general (including NRAs). Two thirds (66%) of Governments found that it was 'easy' to access this technical expertise, while 5% observed it was 'very easy'. Nevertheless, it is of some concern that nearly one-fifth of Governments (18%) reported that it was 'difficult' to access technical expertise from UN agencies; while 11% noted 'don't know', suggesting scope for improvement.

E. Delivering as One

- 50. Is your country interested in Delivering as One (DaO)?**
51. How satisfied is your country with the information provided by the UN Resident Coordinator and other UN officials on Delivering as One?
52. Has the introduction of Delivering as One made it easier or more difficult for your Government to deal with the UN in your country?
53. Please mention briefly any constraints encountered by your country in implementing Delivering as One:
54. How satisfied are you with the UN’s progress to date in fully implementing the Delivery as One approach?

Key Findings

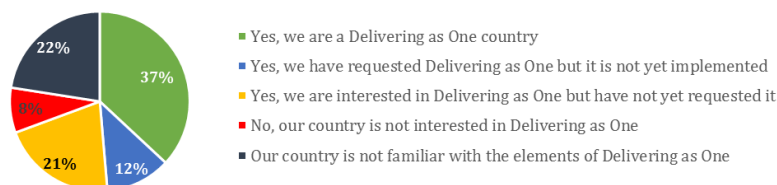
- Though DaO has been available to all countries since the 2012 QCPR, a considerable share of countries (23%) report being unfamiliar with the elements of DaO;
- Interest in DaO is particularly strong in countries with lower income levels—66% of low-income countries are implementing DaO versus 37% of all responding countries;
- Several countries have urged that DaO be more fully implemented as a way that the UN could make itself more effective;
- Only a third of Governments are satisfied with the UN system’s support in terms of providing information about DaO;
- The UN still has to do more to facilitate the introduction of DaO where countries have expressed interest, and to expand it in countries that have already adopted it;
- In Governments’ views, constraints to the implementation of DaO include lack of commitment from UN entities, lack of alignment with national evaluation systems, and misaligned accountability.

Delivering as One (DaO) is a key mechanism through which the UN system aims to improve its coherence at country level. Questions 50 to 54 in the survey inquired about aspects related to DaO adoption and implementation.

Of survey respondents, 37% are implementing DaO, 12% have requested DaO and a further 21% have expressed interest in it. Only 8% indicated that they were not interested. Considering that the DaO approach has been available to all countries since the 2012 QCPR, it seems surprising that a significant share of countries (23%) stated that they were “not familiar with the elements of DaO”.

Figure 9. DaO Status

Question: Is your country interested in Delivering as One (DaO)?

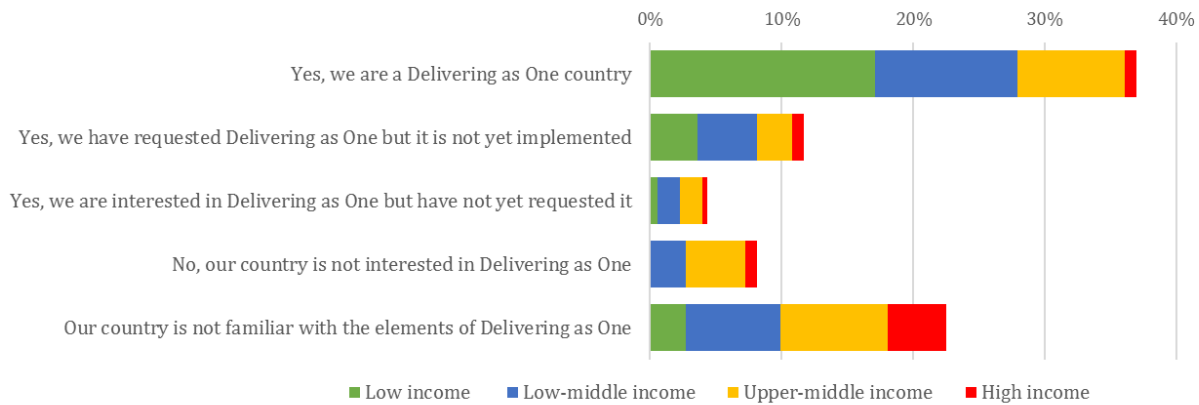


Source: DESA 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments

Another significant feature of the responses to this question is the much larger proportion of low-income countries that are implementing DaO, 66%, compared with 37% for all countries that answered the survey. The figure below shows how many countries are interested in DaO, comparing responses by country income level:

Figure 10. Interest in becoming a DaO country, by income group

Question: Is your country interested in Delivering as One (DaO)?



Source: DESA 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments

Programme countries were asked how satisfied they were with the UN system’s support for DaO, both in terms of providing information about it, and in supporting progress for its implementation. The following table shows the responses on these questions.

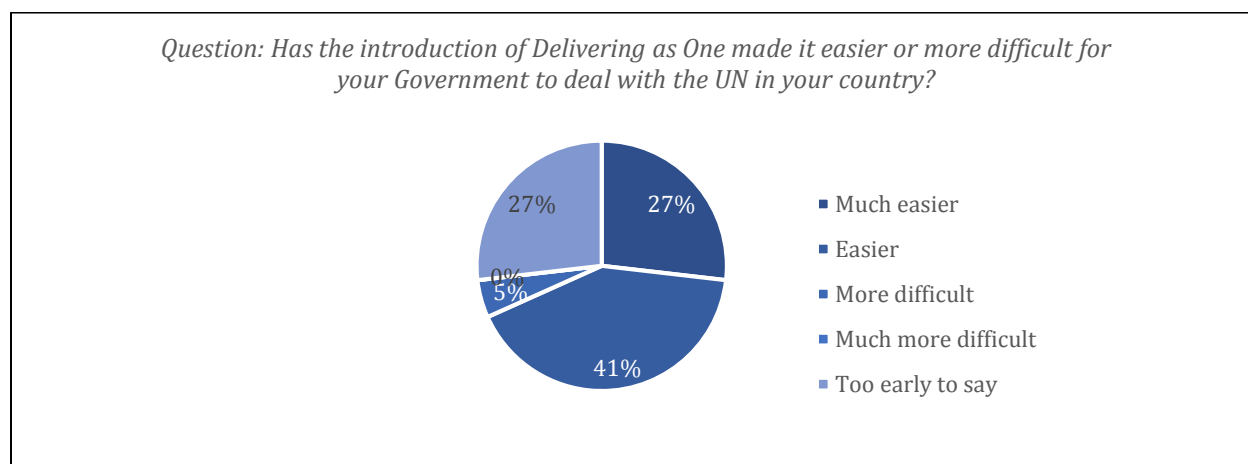
Table 29. UN system support for DaO

| Extent of satisfaction with the UN system’s support for DaO, with reference to: | The information provided by the RC and other UN officials | The progress to date in fully implementing DaO |
|---|---|--|
| | % | % |
| Very satisfied | 4 | 12 |
| Satisfied | 30 | 60 |
| Dissatisfied | 13 | 23 |
| Very dissatisfied | 0 | 0 |
| Don’t know | 53 ¹⁰ | 6 |

Unsatisfied countries pointed to lack of commitment by UN entities as a reason for insufficient progress with DaO. The responses suggest that the UN system has yet to fully meet the demands from programme countries on two levels: to facilitate the introduction of DaO where countries have expressed interest, and to expand DaO in countries that have already adopted it.

The survey asked whether the introduction of DaO made it easier or more difficult for the Government to deal with the UN in the country. 41% of Governments noted that the introduction of DaO had made it ‘easier’; 27% indicated DaO had made it ‘much easier’; while 27% observed it was ‘too early to say’. A further 5% noted the introduction of DaO had made it ‘more difficult’.

¹⁰ Most of these responses were from countries that reported they were not familiar with the elements of DaO.

Figure 11. DaO as a facilitator of Government's dealings with UN in countries

When asked how the UN could make itself “more effective”, several countries urged that DaO be more fully implemented. These answers suggest confirmation that the introduction of DaO has made it easier for Governments to deal with the UN in their countries. One government captured a common theme with a call to “deepen the UN reforms, so as to create unified UNCTs, with the capacity to address cross-cutting themes coherently”.

In terms of constraints to the implementation of DaO, several Governments indicated a perceived lack of commitment to DaO on the part of some UN entities, while others referred to entities not adapting the procedures, and to UNCT members’ “vertical accountability” to their regional heads. The fact that UNDAF reporting was not being aligned with national M&E systems was also mentioned.

The breakdown of responses by country income groups confirms that interest in DaO is particularly strong in countries with lower income levels.

F. Reporting on results

55. Did your Government receive a report from the UN Resident Coordinator on the results achieved by the UN system in your country in the last annual cycle?

56. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

57. Does your Government have a national Results-Based Management (RBM) system?

58. To what extent has the UN country team studied with your Government how results achieved by UN development assistance in your country are defined, measured and reported on, with a view to ensuring compatibility between the national and UN Results-Based Management systems?

59. Has your Government requested support from the UN country team in strengthening national Results-Based Management systems?

60. Please suggest any additional actions the UN could take collectively to make itself more effective in your country:

Key Findings

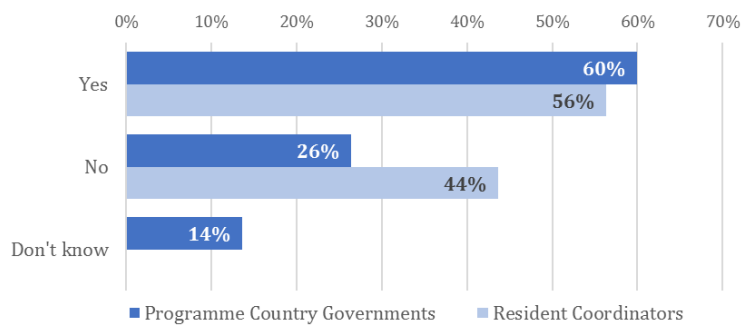
- **Between 2015 and 2017, the number of countries that reported receiving a report on results achieved in the country by the UN increased considerably; the increase is particularly high for DaO countries;**
- **Three fourths of Governments observe that reports were structured around UNDAF outcomes;**
- **Concerns remain however around the content and the coverage of the reports: attention needs to be given to providing more financial information, in ensuring a better coverage of the UN system, and in providing frequent reports, with firm linkages to national development results;**
- **Many Governments (72%) noted studying with the UN how results achieved are reported on to ensure compatibility between national and UN Results-Based Management (RBM) systems;**
- **However, some countries report not having received an adequate response to requests for support in strengthening national RBM systems; overall there is scope for UNCTs to provide more collective support to RBM-related initiatives.**

The survey invited programme country governments to suggest any additional actions that the UN could take collectively to make itself more effective in programme countries. In response, many countries reiterated the points made elsewhere in terms of using national systems and capacities, including strengthening national monitoring and reporting systems.

Questions 55 to 60 explore the views of Governments on reporting on results, including in terms of compatibility with national Result-Based Management systems. A significant concern of Governments, as reported in the surveys in 2012, 2014 and 2015, is around the topic of transparency; particularly around the reporting received from the UN system at country level. Until 2017, the UNDG guidelines called on UNCTs to provide Governments with a report on results achieved by the UN system at least once in an UNDAF cycle. Most UNCTs complied with that requirement.

Figure 12. Reporting to Governments on UNCT results

Question: Did your Government receive a report from the UN Resident Coordinator on the results achieved by the UN system in your country in the last annual cycle?



Source: DESA 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments and DESA 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Sixty percent of Governments indicated that they had received a report from the UN Resident Coordinator on the results achieved by the UN system in the last annual cycle, and 74% of Governments in DaO countries indicated they had received such a report. (This information is

confirmed in the RC survey: regarding providing a report annually, 56% of RCs reported in 2017 that they had provided a report to the government in the last year. Among the Delivering as One countries, the figure was 70%. More than a fourth of Governments (26%) indicated not having received a report from the RC on results achieved.

Compared with the responses from the previous survey, the proportion of both DaO and non-DaO countries that reported receiving a report on results achieved by the UN in the country increased. The share of DaO countries that noted receiving a report increased by 20 percentage points, from 54% to 74%, while that of Non-DaO countries rose from 44% to 52%. In the same line, the share of countries that did not receive a report declined in both categories of countries, as shown in the table below.

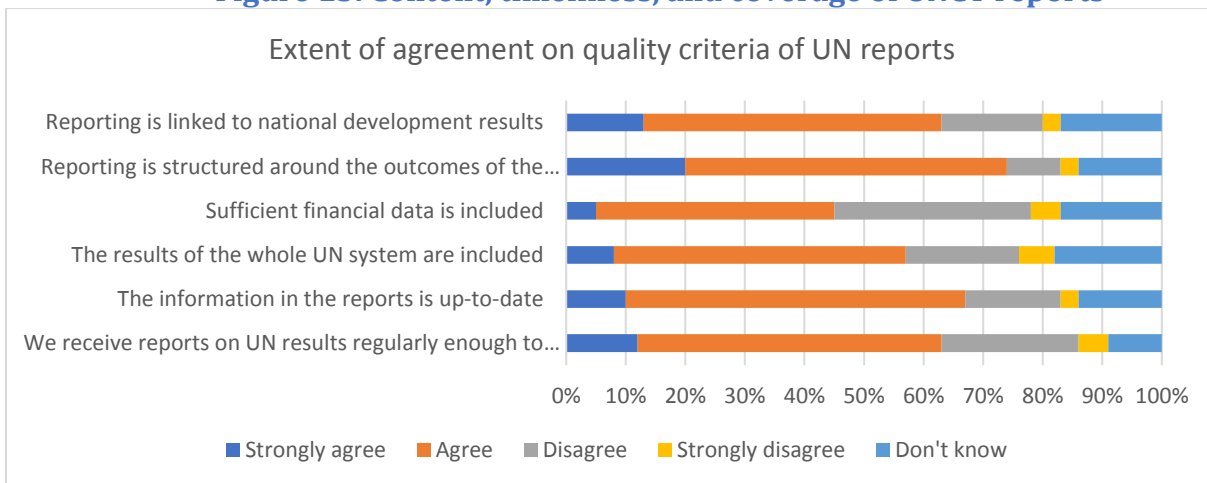
Table 30. Reporting to Governments on UNCT results, by DaO status, 2015-2017

| Have you received a report on results achieved by the UN in the country? | 2015 | | 2017 | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | DaO countries % | Non-DaO countries % | DaO countries % | Non-DaO countries % |
| Yes | 54 | 44 | 74 | 52 |
| No | 28 | 37 | 18 | 31 |
| Don't know | 18 | 20 | 8 | 17 |

On the other hand, concerns exist around the content and the coverage of the reports provided by the UNCTs. The surveys of programme country governments have regularly touched on these issues. In the 2017 survey, only 63% of governments stated that they were receiving reports frequently enough, and 57% noted that UN system-wide results were included. The coverage of system-wide results was 67% in the case of DaO countries and 70% in LDCs).

Regarding whether sufficient financial data was included in the reports, only 48% agreed, with no difference between DaO and non-DaO on this point. A higher percentage (74%) of responses indicated that the UN’s report was structured around UNDAF outcomes, while 63% found that the reports were linked to national development results. While there is scope to improve in all of these aspects, special attention needs to be given to providing more financial information, in ensuring more complete coverage of the UN system, and in establishing firmer linkages to national development results.

Figure 13. Content, timeliness, and coverage of UNCT reports

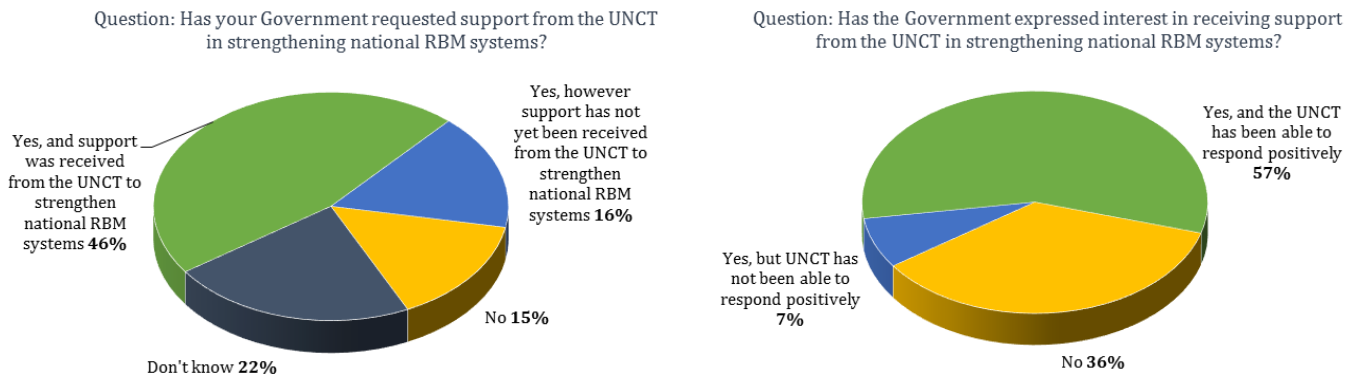


In the QCPR, Member States underscored the importance of national Results-Based Management systems (RBM), and requested the UNDS to develop common methodologies for planning and reporting on results, improving integrated results and resources frameworks and enhancing a results culture.

The survey asked about the extent to which the UNCT had analyzed with the Governments how results achieved by the UN in the country are defined, measured and reported on, with a view to ensuring compatibility between the national and UN RBM systems. Out of the 68 countries that responded that they have an RBM system, 49 countries (or 72%) agreed (to a moderate or large extent) that the UN is working with them on promoting compatibility of RBM systems, as shown below.

The Governments that do have RBM systems in place were asked if they had requested support from the UNCT to strengthen those systems. The responses to this question are shown below. 46% of Governments with RBM systems expressed having requested supported from the UNCT to strengthen the systems and receiving it, while 16% did not receive support after having requested it. A further 15% did not request support.

Figure 14. Supporting national RBM systems



Source: 2017 DESA Survey of Programme Country Governments

Source: 2017 DESA Survey of Resident Coordinators

Separately, RCs were asked if the Government had expressed interest in receiving support from the UN country team in strengthening national RBM systems. The responses depicted in the above figures show consistency as far as the proportion of RCs noting having received no requests (36%) is similar to the proportion of Governments saying 'No' or 'Don't know' (37% altogether).

On the other hand, there appear to be a number of countries where the government has not received an adequate response to requests for support in strengthening national RBM systems, as suggested by these results. Overall, there seems to be scope for UNCTs to provide more collective support to RBM-related initiatives.

The survey invited programme country governments to suggest any additional actions that the UN could take collectively to make itself more effective in countries. In response, many Governments reiterated the points made elsewhere in terms of using national systems and capacities, including strengthening national monitoring and reporting systems. Several countries urged that DaO be more fully implemented, and one government captured a common theme with a call to “deepen the UN

reforms, so as to create unified UN country teams, with the capacity to address cross-cutting themes coherently.”

G. Partnerships

- 61. To what extent has the UN contributed to building the capacity of the country to engage in partnerships:**
- 62. The UN plays a catalytic role in facilitating partnerships:**

Key Findings

- **The UN is viewed by programme countries as both contributing to building national capacities to engage in partnerships, as well as in playing a catalytic role to facilitate them;**
- **Programme countries see scope for the UN to do more in terms of strengthening national capacities, possibly indicating the need for strengthened skills sets of UNCTs in this area.**

Programme countries were asked about the extent to which the UN has contributed to building the capacity of the country to engage in partnerships. The responses to the question are shown in the table below.

Table 31. UN support towards partnerships: capacity building

| The UN has contributed to building the capacity of the country to engage in partnerships | |
|--|----|
| | % |
| To a large extent | 26 |
| To a moderate extent | 52 |
| To a small extent | 16 |
| Not at all | 2 |
| Don't know | 4 |

Considering the information from the above table, as well as the one below (question 62), the following inferences can be made. Countries view the UN as more active in directly facilitating partnerships (where 87% of countries agree to a moderate or large extent, as shown below) than in building national capacities for partnerships (where 78% agree, this table).

Consistent with responses elsewhere in the survey, programme countries thus see scope for the UN to do more in terms of strengthening national capacities, possibly indicating the need for strengthened skills sets of UNCTs in regard to capacity development methodologies.

Programme countries were also asked about whether the UN plays a catalytic role in facilitating partnerships. The responses to the question are shown in the table below. As discussed above, 87% of governments ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the UN plays a catalytic role in facilitating partnerships. Specifically, 69% of Governments ‘agree’ with this statement, while 18% ‘strongly agree’. Only 7% indicated that they disagreed. A few governments further suggested that ‘catalytic role’ could be an exaggeration, or should not be seen as contrary to national ownership.

Table 32. UN support towards partnerships: catalytic role

| The UN plays a catalytic role in facilitating partnerships | |
|--|----|
| | % |
| Strongly agree | 18 |
| Agree | 69 |
| Disagree | 7 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 |
| Don't know | 6 |

H. South-south and triangular cooperation

- 63. Does your country provide development cooperation to other countries (e.g., South-South cooperation or other peer-to-peer exchange platforms)?**
- 64. Does your country exchange information and best practices with South-South partners on science, technology, and innovation to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?**
- 65. Has the United Nations system undertaken any activities in your country to support South-South or triangular cooperation?**
- 66. Please mention briefly any challenges you have encountered in working with the United Nations system on South-South and triangular cooperation:**
- 67. Please provide a rough estimate of your country's annual expenditure on South-South cooperation:**

Key Findings

- **South-south cooperation is becoming an increasingly favoured modality. A growing number of countries have either created agencies dedicated to SSC or have boosted SSC capacities within their cooperation institutions;**
- **With respect to challenges faced by Governments, funding, suitable implementation and monitoring procedures, and language barriers were among those most mentioned;**
- **Some Governments urged UN entities to be more forthcoming in providing information about SSC opportunities and modalities.**

South-South cooperation (SSC) displays an increasing trend. The 2017 Programme Country Government survey shows that 74% of survey respondents providing development cooperation to other countries. This share has grown compared to the one in 2015 (at 63%), as shown in table 33 below. In the same line, the proportion of Governments that responded in the negative has shrunk since (from 24% in 2015 to 20% in 2017). In terms of country income levels and other demographic factors, there were no significant differences in the responses to whether development cooperation is provided to other countries.

Table 33. Country provides development cooperation, 2015-2017

| Does your country provide development cooperation to other countries (e.g., South-South cooperation or other peer-to-peer exchange platforms)? | 2017 % | 2015 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| Yes | 74 | 63 |
| No | 20 | 24 |
| Don't know | 6 | 14 |

Of the countries who provide SSC, 84% reported exchanging information and best practices on the use of science, technology and innovation to advance sustainable development. A further 7% noted no such exchanges, while 9% responded 'don't know'. There were only minimal differences in the responses in terms of country income levels and other demographic factors.

A growing number of countries have either created agencies dedicated to SSC or have boosted SSC capacities within their cooperation institutions. As reported above, 74% of programme countries noted that they provide development cooperation to other countries (e.g., South-South cooperation or other peer-to-peer exchange platforms). This figure is confirmed by the responses from Resident Coordinators where 75% of responding RCs noted that the Government requested support on SSC.

Among the countries that reported providing development cooperation to other countries, 84% reported that the UN had undertaken activities in their country to support South-South cooperation or triangular cooperation. The results are shown in the table below, in addition to the results from questions 63 and 64.

Table 34. Provision of South-South Cooperation, exchange of information & best practices

| Activity | Yes | | No | | Don't know ¹¹ | | Total | |
|---|-----|----|----|----|--------------------------|----|-------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| We provide development cooperation to other countries | 81 | 74 | 22 | 20 | 7 | 6 | 110 | 100 |
| We exchange information and best practices with South-South partners on science, technology, and innovation to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals | 68 | 84 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 81 | 100 |
| The UN has undertaken activities in the country to support South-South cooperation or triangular cooperation | 67 | 84 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 80 | 100 |

It is worth noting that nearly all governments from DaO countries answered in the affirmative.

Table 35. UN support for South-South or triangular cooperation, 2014-2017

| UN supports the country's south-south or triangular cooperation: | 2017 | 2015 | 2014 |
|--|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % |
| Yes | 84 | 54 | 66 |
| No | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| Don't know | 11 | 36 | 19 |

The same question was also asked in the 2014 and the 2015 survey of programme country governments. As shown in the table above, the share of countries that report that the UN has undertaken activities in the country to support South-South or triangular cooperation has grown considerably, by 30 percentage points: from 54% in 2015 to 84% in 2017.

Programme country governments were invited to mention any challenges that they had encountered in regards to working with the UN system on South-South and triangular cooperation. Several

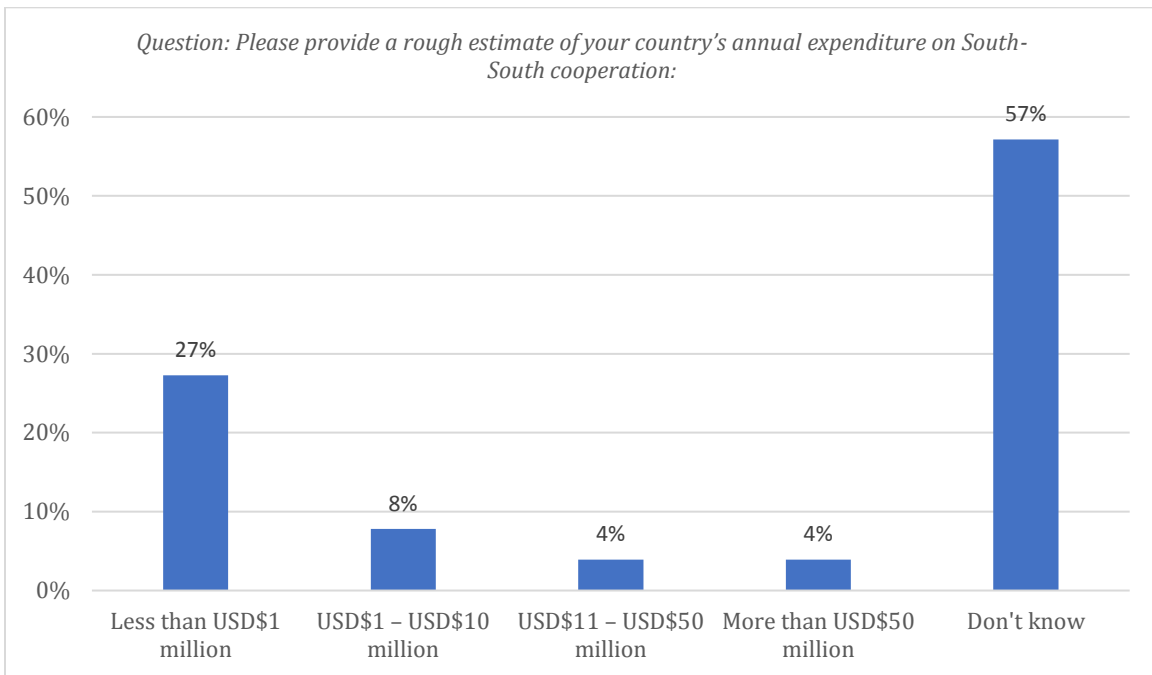
¹¹ In addition to the 'Don't knows', 11 countries skipped the first question. Only the countries that answered 'Yes' were asked the remaining questions about South-South Cooperation.

Governments mentioned challenges regarding both funding, and suitable implementation and monitoring procedures. Others mentioned language barriers. Some Governments urged UN entities to be more forthcoming in providing information about SSC opportunities and modalities. Possibly reflecting the lack of tried and tested procedures, one government mentioned a lack of coordination and communication in planning certain activities, while another noted too many actors involved in decision-making.

A leading Southern cooperation partner mentioned the difficulty that some UN entities seem to have in understanding SSC as a modality of multilateral cooperation, as well as in providing guidelines and practices on how to proceed on the ground: “UN agencies have difficulty to understand the guiding principles and practices of South-South cooperation. UN agencies also have difficulty to consider South-South cooperation as an implementing modality in multilateral cooperation” as well as in understanding SSC’s guiding principles and practices.

The survey asked programme country governments to provide a rough estimate of their country’s annual expenditure on South-South Cooperation. Responses are shown in the figure below. Out of 77 Governments that provided an answer to this question, 27% noted that their country spends less than USD\$1 million a year on SSC. A further 8% indicated spending between one and 10 million yearly, while 4% noted an annual expenditure of between 11 and 50 million; and 4% indicated spending more than 50 million per year. More than half (57%) of Governments chose ‘don’t know’.

Figure 15. Annual expenditure on South-South cooperation, 2017



IV. EFFICIENCY

A. Use of resources

68. *All things considered, the UN is efficient in providing its support to your country.*
69. *To what extent does your country agree or disagree that the UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste:*
70. *There is a clear division of labour (that is, no duplication or overlaps) among the activities of UN agencies in the country:*
71. *Please mention briefly the key contributing factors that have facilitated a clear division of labour among the activities of UN agencies in the country:*
72. *Please mention briefly any challenges to ensuring a clear division of labour among the activities of UN agencies in the country:*
73. *With regard to improving efficiency, please briefly describe any key contributing factors that have helped to foster collaboration among UN agencies in your country:*
74. *As far as you know, to what extent do UN agencies in your country compete with each other for donor funding?*
75. *Please explain briefly any key contributing factors that helped to prevent or minimise any competition among UN agencies in your country:*
76. *Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:*
77. *Comparing the UN development system with other development partners, how does your country find the workload in complying with their procedures?*
78. *To reduce the workload on national partners, how important is it for the UN development system to take the following measures?*

Key Findings

- Overall, government perceptions of UN efficiency and prudent use of funds has not changed in recent years;
- Governments in general have not seen improvements in regard to a clear division of labour among UN agencies at country level. While this applies in countries of all typologies, duplication and competition appear to be greatest in countries with large programmes and those facing humanitarian challenges;
- Countries where the situation had improved attributed it to such measures as assigning a lead agency for each area of the UNDAF and/or more generally, by implementing DaO;
- Notable constraints on improvement include pressure on UNCT members from their headquarters to compete for non-core funds;
- Working with the UN is seen, overall, as entailing about the same workload as dealing with other development partners;
- Governments strongly support further UN measures to simplify and harmonise country programming procedures, work planning and reporting processes, coordinate capacity building activities, and strengthen the role of the UN resident coordinator.

The survey asked Governments about their view on whether the UN is efficient in providing support to their countries, all things considered. 82% of Governments 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'.

Specifically, 66% of Governments 'agreed', while only 16% of Governments 'strongly agreed'. More than a tenth (12%) of Governments disagreed with the statement that, all things considered, the UN is efficient in providing support to their countries.

Table 36. Efficiency of UN support, 2012-2017

| All things considered, the UN is efficient in providing its support to your country: | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Strongly agree | 16 | 20 | 25 | 23 |
| Agree* | 66 | 68 | 66 | 68 |
| Disagree* | 12 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Don't know | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 |

*Was somewhat agree/somewhat disagree prior to 2017.

The share of Governments who 'agree' that, all things considered, the UN is efficient in providing support to their country has remained more or less the same in comparison with previous years. Nevertheless, these results must be interpreted with caution, given the adjustment in metrics discussed in the Demographics section above. One way of doing this is by comparing the sum of those who 'somewhat agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2015 to those who 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2017. Then, it is possible to see that the 88% of Governments that agreed that the UN is efficient in providing its support to countries in 2015 declined to 82% in 2017. This matches the increase in disagreement, which has increased from 8% in 2015 to 12% in 2017.

The survey asked Governments about their agreement to the extent to which the UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste. Overall, 73% of Governments 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement. Specifically, 62% of Governments 'agreed', while only 11% of Governments 'strongly agreed' that the UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste. Furthermore, 13% of Governments disagreed that the UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste. The extent of strong agreement is lower, and the disagreement is higher, than seen on many questions in the survey, suggesting that there is definite scope for improvement.

Table 37. UN Efficient use of funds, 2012-2017

| To what extent does your country agree or disagree that the UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste: | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % | 2012 % |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Strongly agree | 11 | 21 | 19 | 19 |
| Agree | 62 | 55 | 58 | 59 |
| Disagree | 13 | 12 | 13 | 16 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Don't know | 11 | 11 | 10 | 4 |

Compared with 2015, the share of Governments that 'agreed' or 'strongly disagreed' remains more or less constant, with a slightly diminishing trend (73% in 2017 compared to 76% in 2015, 77% in 2014; and 78% in 2012).¹² The proportion of Governments that 'disagree' that the UN uses funds

¹² Caution is advised in interpreting these results given the metric adjustment in the 2017 survey, discussed in the *Demographics* section, above.

carefully and avoids waste has also stayed for the most part the same, between 12% and 13% in the past three surveys.

Since 2012, the surveys of programme country governments and UNCTs have offered insights into the extent to which UN entities are viewed to be working *together* at the country level. Or the opposite, results to the surveys have also shed light on the extent to which UN entities are seen to be overlapping or in competition. A key question in this regard has been about a clear division of labour vis-à-vis overlaps.

Table 38 below shows the results to this question from both the 2015 and 2017 surveys. The data must be interpreted with caution, due to adjustments in the answer metric. Namely, the word 'somewhat' was omitted in 2017 to add clarity. The information in the table could thus give the impression that, over these two years, there was a noticeable drop in the share of countries that 'strongly agree' that there is a clear division of labour among UN entities, and a corresponding increase in the 'disagree' category (formerly 'somewhat disagree'). However, the drop in 'strongly agree' category could be due mainly to the availability of 'agree' as a choice, instead of the less enthusiastic 'somewhat agree' option. For this reason, it is more useful to consider the combined scores for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' (or 'somewhat agree'). In this case, the change is from 70% of Governments that agree in 2015 to 63% that agree in 2017. Such change may be within the range of variation that could occur due to the fact that not exactly the same countries responded to the survey in 2017 compared with 2015.

Regardless of how the data is viewed, the following two conclusions can be drawn with confidence. First, there was no perceptible improvement over this period; and second, the system faces a serious challenge as evidenced by the 30% of countries that disagreed with the statement in 2017.

Table 38. Clear division of labour (versus overlaps) among UN entities, 2015 & 2017

| There is a clear division of labour among the activities of UN agencies: | | | | |
|--|----|------|-------------------|--|
| 2015 | | 2017 | | |
| | % | % | | |
| Strongly agree | 16 | 5 | Strongly agree | |
| Somewhat agree | 54 | 58 | Agree | |
| Somewhat disagree | 18 | 27 | Disagree | |
| Strongly disagree | 5 | 3 | Strongly disagree | |
| Don't know | 7 | 7 | Don't know | |

The breakdowns of responses give rise to additional concerns. Among the countries with large programmes (by volume), the share of Governments who disagreed with the statement was higher, at 47%. For the purpose of this breakdown, the programme countries were divided into three groups, in terms of large, medium and small UN expenditures.¹³

Another breakdown excluded humanitarian assistance when allocating the countries into three groups. In this case, disagreement was greater than agreement among the large country group: 63% of them disagreed with the statement that a clear division of labour exists. Conversely, the countries with small programmes were the most likely to agree. There was little difference between the responses from DaO countries and non-DaO countries. It seems quite likely that the less clear

¹³ Large programmes were defined as those with annual UN expenditures of over \$200m, medium was defined as between \$50 million and \$200 million, and small was below \$50 million.

division of labour is a reflection of more competition among agencies for funding in countries where there is a relatively large volume of resources at stake.

One large country that ‘strongly agreed’ that there is a clear division of labour among UN entities explained that they had prevented duplication by making each agency a lead agency for one of the thematic areas of the UNDAF. Another Government that ‘agreed’ that there is a clear division of labor among UN entities pointed to the introduction of DaO as a determinant factor

Various obstacles were noted among the countries that disagreed that there is a clear division of labour among the activities of UN agencies in the country. Several countries referred to lack of coordination on the UN side, while others mentioned budget allocation taking place “in silos”. Others mentioned agencies having individual rather than collective work plans; overlapping mandates; contradictory instructions to the field from agency HQ; and competition for resources. Other obstacles noted were inadequate consultations with the government, and lack of coordination within the government; plus the fact that many development challenges are “transversal” in nature, and that DaO also calls for “transversal” action. Regarding overlapping mandates, several governments noted overlaps in the areas of health, women and children.

RCs’ comments broadly echoed those of governments. A typical comment was: *“There is some duplication and overlap between agencies but we try to resolve this through coordination. Part of the problem is that agencies are competing for donor funding to an extent [that] drives competition among agencies. Agency HQs and regional staff, to some extent, also encourage agencies to compete for funding.”*

The programme country survey also offered governments the opportunity to describe any key contributing factors that have helped to foster collaboration among UN agencies in their country. In response, several Governments mentioned Delivering as One and the creation of results groups; and some mentioned recent work on preparing or reviewing the UNDAF. Governments also pointed to strong leadership on the part of the RC or the government or both; to the influence of local donors; and to regular meetings among all the parties. Some governments reiterated the related challenges that they observe: one country (an LDC) indicated that some UN agency country offices were “not needed”.

Since 2014, the survey of programme countries has asked Governments if they are aware of competition for donor funding among UN entities. Table 39 below shows their responses; excluding countries that checked ‘don’t know’ or that skipped the question.

Table 39. Competition for donor funding, 2014-2017

| Extent to which competition among UN entities for donor funds occurs: | 2017 % | 2015 % | 2014 % |
|---|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| To a large extent | 19 | 17 | 20 |
| To a moderate extent | 51 | 42 | 46 |
| To a small extent | 22 | 20 | 25 |
| Not at all | 8 | 24 ¹⁴ | 9 |

¹⁴ The option ‘Don’t Know’ was not available in 2015, which may explain the high figure compared with 2014 and 2017.

The evidence suggests that a significant amount of competition for donor funding among UN entities remains; and that most recipient Governments are aware of this. Responses do not differ greatly when disaggregated by country income level, or country size by volume of UN funding. LDCs and landlocked developing countries are somewhat more likely to note that competition occurs to a large or moderate extent.

Programme countries were invited to mention any factors that may have helped to prevent or minimise competition among UN agencies in their country. In response, several Governments mentioned Delivering as One as an important factor to prevent/minimize competition. Other countries commented on clear agency mandates and areas of activity. In addition, regular dialogue and transparency, willingness to collaborate, and strong leadership of the Government were also mentioned as key factors.

It is clear that, under some circumstances, competition among UN entities can be beneficial. In the understanding that there are both healthy and unhealthy aspects to competition, the survey asked programme country governments on the subject. Between 109 and 110 Governments provided answers to the following questions.

The evidence suggests that most Governments view competition among UN entities as unproductive. Over half of countries (58%) 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that competition among UN agencies is healthy and that the government welcomes it; while over a third (34%) is in agreement or strong agreement. A similar proportion is found in terms of whether competition among UN agencies increases overall funding for the country: over half (54%) 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that competition increases funding, while roughly a third (31%) of Governments 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement. And the pattern continues: more than half of Governments believe that competition among UN entities creates confusion for the Government; that it increases the workload on Government officials; and that it diverts the agencies' attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country (57%, 55%, and 55%, respectively of Governments 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with these statement; while roughly a third 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree': 34%, 35%, and 35%, respectively).

Table 40. Effects of competition among UN agencies on governments, 2017

| Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: | Strongly agree % | Agree % | Disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % |
|--|------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Competition among UN agencies is healthy and the Government welcomes it | 6 | 28 | 40 | 18 | 8 |
| Competition among UN agencies increases overall UN funding for the country | 6 | 25 | 38 | 16 | 17 |
| Competition among UN agencies creates confusion for the Government | 20 | 37 | 29 | 5 | 9 |
| Competition among UN agencies increases the workload on Government officials | 16 | 39 | 28 | 7 | 10 |
| Competition among UN agencies diverts the agencies' attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country | 14 | 41 | 30 | 5 | 11 |

A trend analysis suggests slightly more favourable responses compared to 2015. As before, given the adjustment in metrics discussed in the Demographics section, comparing 2017 responses with those of 2015 must be interpreted with caution. Comparisons are performed taking the sum of those who 'somewhat agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2015 versus those who 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' in 2017. As shown below, the share of Governments in 2017 that note that competition among UN agencies is healthy and that the Government welcomes it has increased since 2015, as has the share of those that perceive that competition increases overall funding. In the same line, the share of Governments that report that competition among UN agencies creates confusion for the Government, increases the workload of Government officials, and diverts the agencies' attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country has decreased between 2015 and 2017, somewhat considerably—with all the caveats of comparing these years, as noted before.

Table 41. Effects of competition among UN agencies on governments, 2015-2017

| Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: | 2017 Strongly agree & agree % | 2015 Strongly agree & somewhat agree % |
|--|--|---|
| Competition among UN agencies is healthy and the Government welcomes it | 34 | 31 |
| Competition among UN agencies increases overall UN funding for the country | 31 | 28 |
| Competition among UN agencies creates confusion for the Government | 57 | 65 |
| Competition among UN agencies increases the workload on Government officials | 55 | 70 |
| Competition among UN agencies diverts the entites' attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country | 55 | 66 |

The survey asked programme country governments about how the UNDS compares with other development partners in terms of the workload for countries in complying with their procedures. Overall, the responses suggest that the UN is perceived similarly to other partners. The results, presented in the table below, show that responses are roughly divided in thirds: one third of Governments (33%) expressed that it is 'slightly less' or 'much less' work to deal with the UN than with other development partners. On the other side of the spectrum, roughly another third of Governments (34%) indicated that it is 'slightly more' or 'much more' work to deal with the UN. Furthermore, slightly less than a third of Governments (28%) noted that the workload is about the same; while 6% indicated 'don't know'.

Table 42. Workload on countries: UNDS vs. other development partners

| Comparing the UN development system with other development partners, how does your country find the workload in complying with their procedures? | 2017 % |
|--|-----------|
| It is much less work to deal with the UN | 8 |
| It is slightly less work to deal with the UN | 25 |
| The workload is about the same | 28 |
| It is slightly more work to deal with the UN | 23 |
| It is much more work to deal with the UN | 11 |
| Don't know | 6 |

The survey asked programme country governments about potential measures that could be taken by the UNDS to reduce the workload on national partners. Responses are shown in the table below.

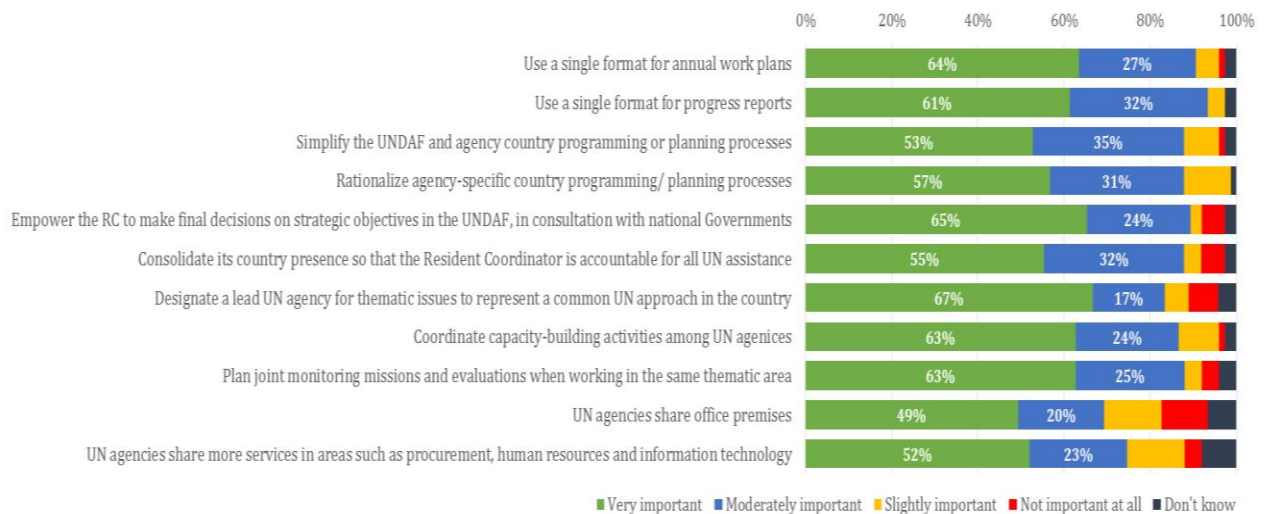
Governments expressed that UN system programming processes could be simplified and harmonized as a means to reducing the workload on governments. The survey revealed that over half of Governments (53%) judged that it was ‘very important’ for the UN system to simplify the UNDAF and agency country programming or planning processes, as a way to reduce the workload on national partners. A further 35% stated that such a measure was ‘moderately important’. Similarly, over half (57%) of respondents stated it was ‘very important’ for the UN entities to ‘rationalise agency-specific country programming and planning processes’; while 31% expressed that this was ‘moderately important’. The other answer options included ‘slightly important’, ‘not important at all’ and ‘don’t know’, and as shown below, they received only around 10% of responses between them in this category.

Particularly strong support was indicated for single formats progress reports: 93% of respondents indicated ‘using a single format for progress reports’ was very or moderately important. There was also clear support for joint monitoring and evaluation, and coordinated approaches to capacity building. In this line, 64% of governments considered it ‘very important’ for the UN system to use a single format for annual work plans; while a further 32% noted that such a measure was ‘moderately important’.

In addition, most governments would like to see the RC playing a stronger role as it would reduce the workload and transaction costs on national partners. To do so, RCs need to be able to make final decisions on strategic objectives in the UNDAF, of which 65% of Governments stated was ‘very important’. Furthermore, to improve RC accountability on UN activities in country, more than half of the Governments (55%) indicated that it was ‘very important’ for the UN to ‘consolidate its country presence’.

Figure 16. Measures towards reducing the workload on national partners

Question: To reduce the workload on national partners, how important is it for the UN development system to take the following measures?



B. Joint Programming, Coherence and Coordination

79. Does the UN utilize joint programming to conduct development activities in your country:
 80. UN joint programming has led to greater: (Please select all that apply from the following).
 81. In your opinion, what reforms should the UN system undertake in order to improve the efficiency, coherence, and effectiveness of UN operational activities?
 82. Please suggest any measures that would improve the UN's efficiency in your country.

Key Findings

- The utilization of Joint Programming is more prevalent in DaO countries;
- There appears to be a lack of awareness of Joint Programming options in some parts of the world, most notably in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- A clear majority of Governments indicated that Joint Programming has led to greater UN coherence.

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review encourages the UN to strengthen joint programming processes at the country level, where appropriate. A joint programme is a set of activities contained in a common work plan and related budget, involving two or more UN agencies and (sub-) national partners.

The table below shows the overall results, and the breakdowns by DaO and by programme size. The responses reveal that a very large proportion (87%) of DaO country governments are aware that the UN uses joint programmes in their country; while only the same is true for slightly over half of non-DaO countries (53%). The share of 'don't knows' among non-DaO countries, and also among countries with small programmes, appears high at 30% and 28%, respectively.

Table 43. UN utilization of joint programming, by DaO status & programme country size

| UN utilizes joint programming | Yes % | No % | Don't know % |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|--------------|
| All countries | 67 | 13 | 21 |
| DaO countries | 87 | 5 | 8 |
| Non-DaO countries | 53 | 17 | 30 |
| Countries with large programmes | 71 | 10 | 19 |
| Countries with medium programmes | 72 | 17 | 10 |
| Countries with small programmes | 62 | 11 | 28 |

Considerable differences in the responses are also observable in the regional breakdown, as shown in table 44 below. A high share of Governments in both the Asia and the Pacific region as well as in Eastern and Southern Africa are aware of the fact that the UN utilizes joint programming, both at 80%. Not far behind, are the 70% of Governments in Western and Central Africa, and the 75% of Governments in Europe and Central Asia that are aware of this work. Nevertheless, only 47% of Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 40% of Governments in the Arab States are aware that the UN utilizes joint programming. These figures, along with the fact that eight countries

skipped the question, may suggest that more may be done to raise the awareness of Governments about the option to have joint programmes, particularly in the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 44. UN utilization of joint programming, by region

| UN utilizes joint programming: Breakdown by region | Yes % | No % | Don't know % |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| All countries | 67 | 13 | 21 |
| Africa - Eastern and Southern | 80 | 10 | 10 |
| Africa - Western and Central | 70 | 10 | 20 |
| Arab States | 40 | 27 | 33 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 80 | 10 | 10 |
| Europe and Central Asia | 75 | 0 | 25 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 47 | 13 | 40 |

The survey asked programme country governments whether UN joint programming had led to greater UN coherence, effectiveness and/or efficiency. Among the 50 countries with experience of joint programming, 70% of Governments noted that it led to greater efficiency; over three-quarters (78%) stated that it improved the UN's effectiveness; and more than four-fifths (85%) indicated that it improved UN coherence. One country responded with 'None of the above'.

Table 45. Joint programming and UN coherence, effectiveness, & efficiency

| UN joint programming has led to greater | 2017 % |
|---|-----------|
| UN coherence | 85 |
| UN effectiveness | 78 |
| UN efficiency | 70 |
| None of the above | 1 |

The survey asked programme country governments about their views on the reforms that the UNDS should undertake in order to improve efficiency, coherence and effectiveness of operational activities.

In Governments' views, UN joint programming work is clearly part of the answer as reflected by the high number of Governments that indicate that these programmes promote greater coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency (see response to Question 81, above). One Government, for example, stressed the importance of closer consultation and coordination in developing the UNDAF and country programs; and of pursuing an integrated approach by the UN system.

On the topic of coherence, as mentioned previously, Governments recurrently make calls for the UN to improve its own coordination, and to grant more authority to the RC. The evidence continues to indicate that the division of labour between entities could be improved and that presence could be better tailored to national needs. Other comments included having a common reporting tool for effective coordination and achievement of common results.

The survey invited programme country governments to suggest any measures that would improve the UN's efficiency in the country. Several Governments provided careful comments, mainly centered

around simplification, improved coordination with the government and within UN agencies; avoiding duplication; and helping build domestic capacity in specific areas.

Several Governments commented on the importance of improving coordination and division of labour among UN agencies; as well as of improved coordination and consultation with the governments. Additionally, several calls were made to strengthen the alignment of UN work with national priorities, to fulfill the actual needs of governments. On the latter, one government highlighted the importance of willingness on the UN part to have flexibility on addressing countries' specific development priorities, and of working *with* the Government rather than trying to influence national development decisions. Another one mentioned that the formulation of country programs of UN agencies should involve the Ministry of Finance and Planning to ensure alignment with government priorities. Calls were also made to reform the reporting system to ensure greater transparency.

Finally, as mentioned elsewhere in the survey, UN joint programming was brought up as increasing efficiency, as observed by 70% of programme country governments (see Q80, above).

C. The UN compared with other development partners

83. Please select UP TO TWO partners that you consider to be the preferred provider of each type of support.

84. Please select UP TO TWO partners that best satisfy your Government's needs in respect of each of the performance factors

85. Collaboration between the World Bank and the UN in your country has improved over the past four years:

Key Findings

- **The UN remains largely the preferred partner of choice by programme country governments ranking first in all areas of support except for regional or sub-regional cooperation;**
- **The UN remains the Member States' preferred partner of choice to deliver on its key functions;**
- **The UN is clearly the preferred partner on most performance factors, the main exception being achieving results on time.**

Governments were invited to assess the performance of the UN system in relation to that of other types of development partners, by selecting the top two development partners that best support the country's needs in different categories.

As shown in the table below, the UN remains largely the preferred partner of choice by programme country governments. The UN system is ranked first in all categories except for supporting regional or sub-regional cooperation. Notably, global challenges requiring common action was selected by significantly more Governments (79 in total). In all categories in which the UN is ranked first, it is significantly ahead of the second-preferred partner.

Table 46. Countries' preferred providers of external support, by support category

| Ranked 1 st | UN system (AFP) | Bretton Woods Institutions | Other multilateral & regional institutions not part of the UN | OECD/ DAC partners | Southern partners | Thematic or alliance -based partners (e.g. The Global Fund) |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Ranked 2 nd | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| Global challenges requiring common action (e.g. climate change, water, migration) | 79 | 32 | 24 | 19 | 9 | 17 |
| Supporting regional or sub - regional cooperation | 41 | 18 | 46 | 21 | 22 | 6 |
| Supporting South -South and triangular c ooperation | 57 | 7 | 29 | 14 | 46 | 4 |
| Assisting Governments in leveraging partnerships | 65 | 36 | 23 | 14 | 9 | 0 |
| Mobilizing external resources for development | 57 | 48 | 22 | 30 | 7 | 0 |
| The Government has insufficient experience with this category of partner | 9 | 7 | 11 | 18 | 30 | 24 |

In comparing the UN system with other sources of external assistance for regional or sub-regional support, Governments were more likely to select 'multilateral and regional institutions not part of the UN' over the UN development system. This is the only area of support in which the UN system was not chosen as the preferred source, and the second survey year in a row where the UN is not in the top ranking in this category.

The UN remains the Member States' preferred partner of choice to deliver on its key functions. As table below shows, governments were also asked to assess the performance of the UN system compared to other development partners, and respondents selected the top two partners that best satisfied their country's needs in terms of select performance factors.

As in previous surveys, Governments indicated that the UN is their preferred source of support for capacity development, preferring the UN to any other source of external assistance by a large margin. A large majority of programme countries also selected the 'the UN system' over all other sources of external assistance as their preferred source of 'evidence-based policy advice'. Indeed, the UN comes on top of in each of the seven following areas, with progress on the key functions outlined below, including how the system is reinforcing its support of the different needs of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, MICs and countries in special situations.

Table 47. Countries' preferred providers of external support, by type of support

Question: Select UP TO TWO partners that you consider to be the preferred provider of each type of support.

| Ranked 1 st | UN system (AFP) | Bretton Woods Institutions | Other multilateral & regional institutions not part of the UN | OECD/ DAC partners | Southern partners | Thematic or alliance-based partners (e.g. The Global Fund) |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Ranked 2 nd | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| Strengthening national capacities | 74 | 42 | 27 | 19 | 7 | 5 |
| Providing evidence-based and, where appropriate, integrated policy advice | 68 | 45 | 17 | 18 | 8 | 2 |
| Assisting countries through support with norms and standards | 42 | 41 | 24 | 23 | 10 | 6 |
| Sectoral programming advice and technical assistance | 65 | 41 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 9 |
| Direct support and service delivery | 51 | 38 | 16 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Peace & security | 67 | 6 | 28 | 17 | 9 | 4 |
| Humanitarian assistance | 65 | 13 | 22 | 17 | 7 | 11 |

Turning to performance factors, the UN system compares favourably in the areas of aligning with national priorities, trust, impartiality and accountability to beneficiaries. Results are shown in the table below. While results are encouraging, room for progress remains. Indeed, other survey results highlight room for improvement both in terms of alignment and accountability.

The areas where the UN is perceived to perform less well are 'achieving planned results on time' and 'making decisions transparently'. Regarding the timely achievement of results, there is no significant difference between how the UN and the BWIs are viewed. The UN system's perceived weakness regarding transparency is consistent with feedback from programme countries, reported elsewhere in the survey, notably regarding reporting to national authorities. The survey results in 2017 closely mirror the pattern of 2015 results.

Table 48. Countries' preferred providers of external support, by performance factors
select UP TO TWO partners that best satisfy your Government's needs in respect of each of the performance factors:

| Ranked 1 st | UN system (AFP) | Bretton Woods Institutions | Other multilateral & regional institutions not part of the UN | OECD/ DAC partners | Southern partners | Thematic or alliance-based partners (e.g. The Global Fund) |
|--|-----------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Ranked 2 nd | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| Is impartial | 44 | 21 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 6 |
| Is accountable to beneficiaries | 54 | 28 | 13 | 13 | 4 | 3 |
| Is trusted by national partners | 55 | 29 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 9 |
| Aligns assistance with national needs and priorities | 66 | 33 | 17 | 16 | 7 | 4 |
| Responds quickly to new development needs and priorities | 48 | 33 | 14 | 13 | 8 | 7 |
| Achieves planned results on time | 31 | 30 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 2 |
| Makes decisions transparently | 43 | 28 | 12 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| Willingly collaborates with other external development partners at the country level | 50 | 27 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 4 |
| The Government has insufficient experience with this category of partner | 17 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 26 | 18 |

Source: 2017 DESA Survey of Programme Country Governments

The survey asked programme country governments about whether collaboration between the World Bank and the UN in their country had improved over the past four years. 62% of Governments 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement. Specifically, 39% of Governments 'agreed', while almost one-fourth (23%) 'strongly agreed' that collaboration had improved. On the other hand, 14% of Governments 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that collaboration had improved. A considerable share, one-fifth (20%), stated being unaware of collaboration between the World Bank and the UN.

Table 49. Collaboration between the World Bank and the UN in country

| Collaboration between the World Bank and the UN in your country has improved over the past four years: | 2017 % |
|--|--------|
| Strongly agree | 23 |
| Agree | 39 |
| Disagree | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | 9 |
| I am unaware of collaboration between the World Bank and the UN | 20 |
| The World Bank does not operate in this country | 3 |

Optional comments on any aspect of the survey

18 countries commented on the survey and mostly welcomed it.

While some governments felt the survey was too long, others indicated that the questions were pertinent and helped highlight some issues regarding the work of the UN system that were previously not known to the respondent.

One Government noted *“These kinds of surveys give the possibility to show strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the cooperation and bring to better understanding among the stakeholders that could help to enhance future cooperation.”*