DESA Survey of Resident Coordinators 2017

February 2017

Development Cooperation Policy Branch
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

I. Table of Contents

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

FOREWORD

To monitor the implementation of resolution 71/243 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, in order to inform annual reporting to the Economic and Social Council (paragraph 83). In this context, and in line with previous requests in General Assembly resolution 67/226, a survey of Resident Coordinators was also conducted in 2013, 2014 and in 2015.

Following the adoption of the 2016 QCPR, the 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (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 UN DESA transmitted through the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) to all Resident Coordinators (RCs). Follow up with RCs was conducted through DESA, DOCO and the Regional UN Development Groups (R-UNDGs). The overall response rate was to the 2017 survey was high, at 85%, with responses received from 110 RCs. In previous years the response rate was 89% in 2015, 60% in 2014, and 85% in 2013.

The analysis provided in the report is primarily derived from the hard data collected through the survey. Each question, as it appeared to the respondents of the survey, is presented in a box prior to the discussion of the results of that set of questions. A box for optional comments was provided for majority of the survey questions and a summary of the comments is typically provided in the discussion of the results. Not all questions were asked of all respondents. Some questions were skipped where a response was irrelevant or not applicable. This was determined on the respondents' response to a preceding question. It is noted in the report where this occurs.

Most questions were answered by all or nearly all the 110 RCs that responded to the survey. The survey results presented below also, where possible, provide comparisons to data received from the 2015, 2014, and 2013 surveys of Resident Coordinators. The RC survey requires respondents to answer only for the country where they are located.

Please note that the term "entity" is used throughout to refer to UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as departments of the UN Secretariat.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Demographics

This section includes demographic information on the countries from which the responding RC represents. This includes the country's geographic region, income group, and special status, amongst other categories.

Geographic location

Responses were received from 110 resident coordinators. The countries where they are located accounted for some 86% of all country-level expenditures (according to 2016 expenditure data on operational activities for development). In 2017, 100% of RCs in the Arab States responded. The Asia/Pacific (A/P) and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) regions also achieved high response rates of 92% and 88%, respectively. 73% RCs in Africa and 72% in the European Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) responded. The high response rate from all regions allows for a well-represented view of RCs from all regions.

Income group

Using the World Bank classification on income groups, RCs responding to the survey in 2017 were based in the following: 24 in low income countries, 42 in lower-middle income countries, 36 in upper-middle income countries, and 8 in high income countries. 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 country income group, 2013-2017

		Low income	Low-middle income	Upper-middle income	High income
2017	Number of RC that responded	24	42	36	8
	Response rate by income group	**77%**	**79%**	**67%**	**57%**
2015	Number of RC that responded	28	42	39	7
	Response rate by income group	**82%**	**91%**	**95%**	**78%**
2014	Number of RC that responded	15	28	31	4
	Response rate by income group	**44%**	**61%**	**78%**	**44%**
2013	Number of RC that responded	28	41	36	4
	Response rate by income group	**78%**	**89%**	**92%**	**50%**

Source: 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Status as a Least Development Country

72% of Resident Coordinators serving in 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. Respondents serving in LDCs, 2013-2017

	2017 %	2015 %	2014 %	2012 %
LDCs	72	82	50	73

Status as a Small Island Developing State

84% of Resident Coordinators serving in 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. Respondents serving in SIDS, 2013-2017

	2017 %	2015 %	2014 %	2012 %
LDCs	84	90	72	28

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; 22 RCs that completed the survey fell into this category. Countries considered to have a medium-sized programme expenditure were those with annual country-level expenditures of between $50 to $200 million; 37 RCs fell into the category of a medium-sized programme. And finally, those categorized as small programme expenditure were those with annual country-level expenditures of less than $50 million. There were 51 RCs that were categorized as serving in countries with a small programme expenditure.

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.

B. Presence

2. Do you currently serve as Resident Coordinator or Resident Coordinator a.i. for more than one country/territory
3. Please indicate the number of UNCTs in which you currently serve, and for the remaining questions in the survey, please respond with reference to your country of residence
4. Entities represented in the UN Country Team
5. What is the approximate number of UN national staff in the country?
6. What is the approximate number of UN international professional staff in the country?

Table 4. Country coverage by RCs

Cover more than one country or territory?	Number of RCs 2017	Number of RCs 2015
Yes	7	6
No	103	109
Total	110	115

Source: 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The 25 RCs who answered 'yes' were asked how many countries their UNCT covered. In most cases, the answer was one: that is, only the country where they were posted. In seven instances, they were responsible for programmes in more than one country, as the table below shows. The RCs in Barbados and Fiji each cover ten countries.

Table 5. Country coverage by RCs

Number of countries the RC covers	Number of RCs 2017	Number of RCs 2015
Two	2	3
Three	1	0
Four or more	4	3
Total	7	6

Source: 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

In 2017, information on the presence of each UN entity, whether resident or non-resident, was made available through the UNDG IMS. The details are in the table below.

Table 6. Size of UN Country Teams – summary

Number of entities in the country team	2017
10 or less	10
11 to 15	50
16 to 20	50
21 or more	20
Total	130

Source: UNDG IMS

Table 7. Participation of entities in UN country teams[1]

UN entity	Number of UNCTs in which they are resident	Number of UNCTs in which they are non-resident	Number of UNCTs in which they do not participate at all
UNDP	129	1	0
WHO	127	0	3
UNICEF	125	3	2
UNFPA	118	6	6
FAO	108	10	12

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[1] UNDG IMS data provided on 130 UNCTs

UNHCR	93	7	30
WFP	88	2	40
UNAIDS	78	18	34
UN-Women	70	23	37
ILO	59	45	26
UNESCO	54	46	30
OHCHR	42	29	59
OCHA	41	12	77
UNOPS	39	9	82
UNODC	38	32	60
UNIDO	37	33	60
UN Habitat	30	22	78
IFAD	27	15	88
UNEP	21	34	75
ITU	11	2	117
DPA	9	1	120
WMO	7	0	123
ECA	6	2	122
ECLAC	6	3	121
ESCAP	5	1	124
UNRWA	5	0	125
UNISDR	4	1	125
IMO	3	1	126
WIPO	3	0	127
UPU	2	0	128
ESCWA	1	0	129
ICAO	1	1	128
ITC	1	0	129
UNCTAD	0	5	125
DESA	0	0	130
ECE	0	3	127
PBSO	0	0	130
UNITAR	0	0	130
UNWTO	0	0	130

Source: UNDG IMS

Since the numbers of national staff generally far exceed the numbers of international staff, two separate questions were asked, each with its own number ranges, as presented in the table below.

Table 8. Number of UN professional staff in the country, 2017

UN national professional staff	
Number range	**Number of countries**
50 or less	17
51-100	20
101-200	15
201-300	10
301-400	6

Number range	Number of countries
401-500	5
501-600	5
601-700	4
701 and above	26
Skipped the question	2
Total	**108**

Number range	Number of countries
25 or less	27
26-50	15
51-100	15
101-150	14
151-200	12
201-300	7
301-400	6
401 and above	14
Total	**110**

Some factors should be considered when comparing the information in Table x above with personnel statistics produced by the CEB. The CEB's personnel data is limited to staff members who were engaged in an employment of one year or longer at the end of the year for which the data represents. A 'staff member' is defined as a person who is subject to the Staff Rules and Regulations of the UN Common System organization. For further information, see https://www.unsystem.org/content/un-system-human-resources-statistics-reports.

II. RELEVANCE

A. Alignment with national needs and priorities

7. Overall, how would you describe the alignment of activities of the UN with the country's development needs and priorities?
8. The UNCT provides policy advice that is developed through a (please select the most frequently used approach): single-entity process, coordinated process or integrated (joint) process?
9. To what extent do you agree that the UN engages as much as possible with each of the following: i) parliamentarians, ii) civil society, iii) IFI's, iv) bilateral and multilateral actors, v) the private sector?

Key findings
- **Both Governments and RCs consider UN activities closely aligned, although RCs consistently report closer alignment**
- **Countries stating a lack of close alignment reported reasons such as lack 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.**

> **• RCs assess the current levels of engagement with partners as quite high, particularly in terms of engaging with bilateral and multilateral actors.**

Question 7 was asked of both government and RCs since 2012 and the responses are set out in the figure below. Overall, RCs (96%) and governments (84%) considered that the UN system's activities are 'very closely' or 'closely' aligned with the country's development needs and priorities.

Figure 1. UN alignment with national needs and priorities, 2012-2017
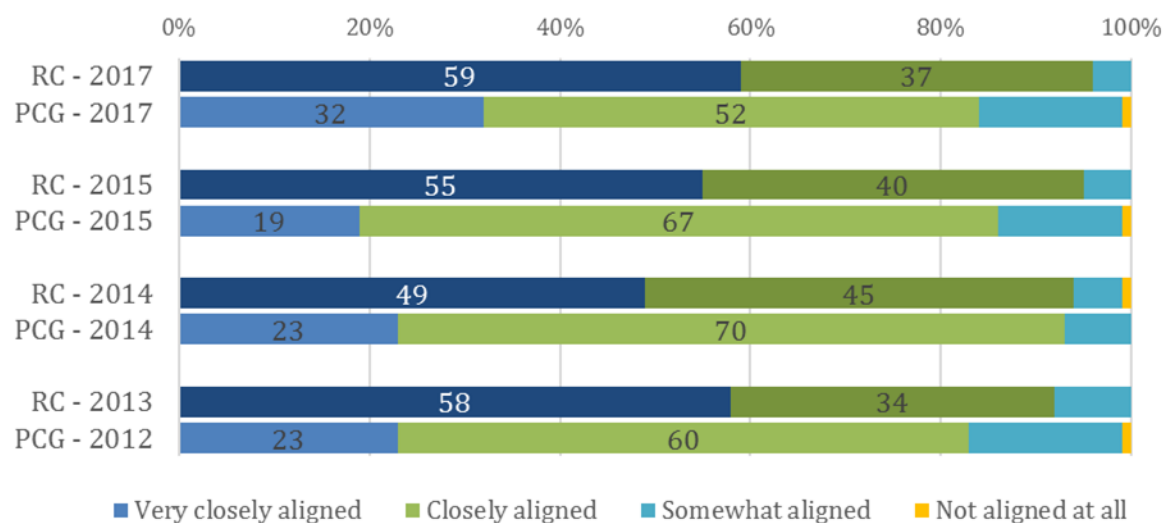
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (PCG)

In countries where DaO has been in effect since 2012 or earlier, alignment was judged to be closer than in non-DaO countries by both RCs and governments. 82% of RCs in countries that adopted DaO in 2012 or earlier rated the alignment as 'very close', compared to 59% for non-DaO countries.

Many RCs (43) noted that the drafting and implementation of the UNDAF helped ensure UN activities were in close alignment with national priorities. Several mentioned that the lack of a national development strategy was an obstacle to very close alignment. Among RCs who suggested improvements, two mentioned a need to improve prioritization of results areas based on the UN's capacities and comparative advantages. To facilitate greater national alignment, RCs urged greater national ownership and government involvement in UNDAF implementation.

In countries with close alignment, governments explained that this 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 the results groups, and effective monitoring and evaluation. Instituting results groups is one of the UNDG Standard Operating Procedures.

In countries reporting a lack close alignment, a variety of constraints were mentioned, including lack 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 2016 QCPR called on the UN system to "provide evidence-based and, where appropriate, integrated policy advice" to support countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. **The results of the survey show that that only 13% of UNCTs report providing policy**

advice through integrated processes. UNCTs generally report using a coordinated process (65%), and still, 22% of UNCTs report providing policy advice developed as a single-entity process. RCs mentioned that the degree of coordination on policy advice varied with the topic, for example, high-profile issues such as gender-based violence being well coordinated.

Figure 2. Coordination and/or Integration of policy advice

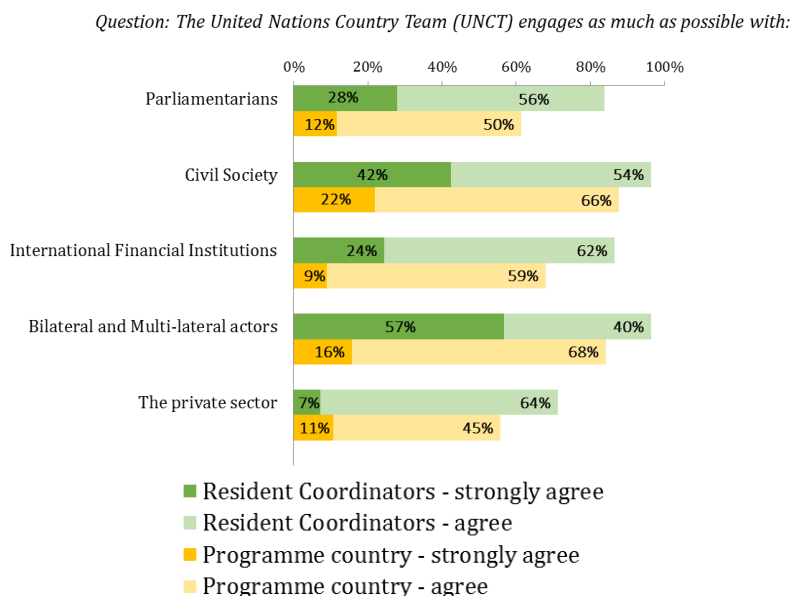*Question: The UNCT generally provides policy advice developed through process that is:*
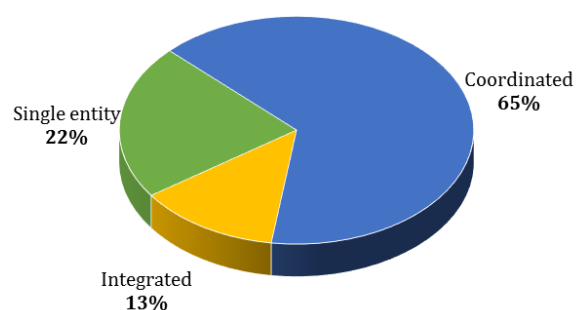
Source: 2017 DESA Survey of Resident Coordinators

RCs assess the current levels of engagement with bilateral and multi-lateral partners highly, with 97% of RCs indicating that their UNCT engages as much as possible with this group of partners (see figure xx). RCs also judge engagement with civil society to be quite strong. However, nearly one in every three RCs did not agree that the UNCT engages as much as possible with the private sector. In the comments provided under this question, RCs referred to local conditions that prevented greater involvement with certain groups, such as the private sector, while others noted that in the context of the SDGs, they saw scope for greater involvement with the private sector.

The same question was asked of governments, and in general there was less agreement among governments that the UN engaged as much as possible with the different categories of partners displayed in figure 3. While the differences in perceptions could be due to some extent to lack of information, **it does seem that most governments see scope for the UN to be more active in engaging with all of these partners**.

Figure 3: UN engagement with partners at country level

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

	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

Parliamentarians
- 28% | 56%
- 12% | 50%

Civil Society
- 42% | 54%
- 22% | 66%

International Financial Institutions
- 24% | 62%
- 9% | 59%

Bilateral and Multi-lateral actors
- 57% | 40%
- 16% | 68%

The private sector
- 7% | 64%
- 11% | 45%

■ Resident Coordinators - strongly agree
■ Resident Coordinators - agree
■ Programme country - strongly agree
■ Programme country - agree

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

B. Alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

> *10. To what extent do you agree that the UNCT ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society.*
> *11. Has the government produced a national SDG progress report in the past 12 months?*
> *12. Please briefly describe what type of support was provided, which entities provided assistance, and whether the report was country-led or led by the UN.*
> *13. Please briefly explain why assistance was not provided and whether the government requested assistance*

> **Key findings**
> - **Half of RCs are of the view that the UN ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society.**
> - **Encouragingly, 31% of programme countries have already prepared a first SDG progress report.**

Overall, 50% of RCs "strongly agreed" that the UN ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Of note, RCs in low-income countries were especially likely to 'strongly agree' (75%) that adequate attention and resources are provided to the poorest and most vulnerable people..

However, a significantly lower share of Governments 'strongly agreed' that the UN ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable (see figure below).

Figure 4: UN engagement with partners at country level

Question: The UN ensures adequate attention and resources are given to the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society:
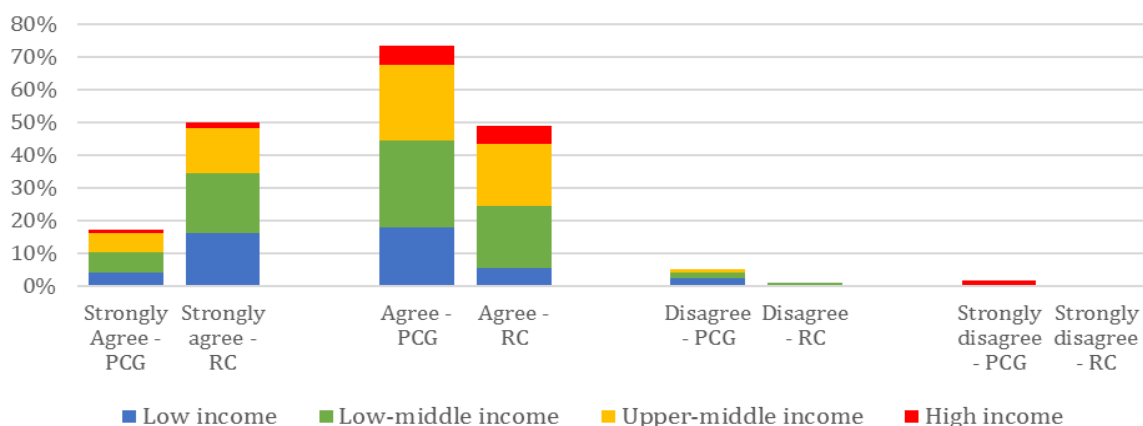
In providing comments, many RCs mentioned the mechanisms (such as rights-base analysis, CCA and UNDAF) that had helped ensure adequate attention was given to the neediest, while others mentioned adjustments that are underway to bring about better alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

Voluntary National Review

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages Member States to "*conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven*" (A/RES/70/1/OP79). One of these mechanisms is the National SDG progress reports, which are expected to form the basis for systematic follow-up and review.

Table 9 – Reporting on SDG progress

Has the government produced an SDG progress report in the past 12 months?	%
Yes, and the UNCT assisted with the production of this report	28
Yes, however the UNCT did not assist with the production of the report	3
No, the government has not produced this report	69
Total	100

Considering that the 2030 Agenda was adopted 2 years ago, it is encouraging that 31% of programme countries have already prepared a first SDG progress report. Under optional comments many RCs mentioned actions underway in country to produce an SDG report. Several RCs referred to actions that were being taken to establish adequate baseline data. In this regard, one mentioned the development of a national SDG Roadmap that analyses the gaps, challenges and way forward vis-à-vis the SDG goals, targets and indicators. Regarding the preparation process, one RC explained that: "*A national committee, chaired by the Minister of Planning and composed of line ministries is responsible for monitoring SDG implementation and recommending policy adjustments at the national level for accelerated implementation. Community level committees chaired by Governors are responsible for reporting on progress to the national committee.*" Some RCs mentioned that new national development plans were being prepared in alignment with the 2030 Agenda. In one country, the SDG reporting initiative had stimulated the preparation of a national human development report.

All respondents affirmed that the SDG progress report was country led, or in one case co-led by the government and the UN. RCs commented that UN support mainly consisted of technical expertise/assistance by UNCT entities, and that generally all or nearly all members of the UNCT were engaged. Support was often provided with statistics, with discrete elements of the report, and sometimes with putting the report together. In many countries, support was provided for convening of national consultative dialogues/workshops, and other forms of consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders at national and sub-national levels. Other ways the UN supported the process were: advocacy and raising awareness of high level decision makers on the importance of the reporting process and measurement of progress towards to localization of the SDGs; and methodological support through the UNDG developed Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) system[2] .

C. Strengthening national capacities

> *14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the UN has contributed to the strengthening of national capacities in each of the following: i) planning; ii) management; iii) evaluation; iv) statistics?*
>
> *15. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the UN has used following as much as possible: i) national procurement systems; ii) national financial system; iii) national monitoring and reporting systems; iv) national statistical systems; v) national experts in the design of programmes and projects; vi) national institutions in the design of programmes and projects; vii) national institutions in the implementation of programmes and projects; viii) national institutions in the evaluation of programmes and projects?*
>
> *16. Considering the financial management and other capacities available in the country, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the UNDS is using parallel implementation units (PIUs) as little as possible?*
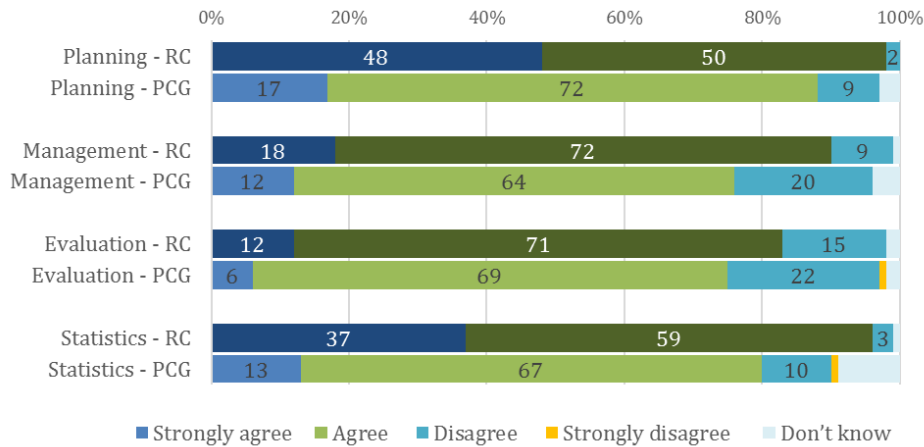

Key findings
- **The UNCT has made the greatest contribution to strengthening capacities in planning for development programmes, but was less successful in strengthening national capacities in statistics, evaluation, and management, which shows there is clearly scope for the UN to become more effective in these respects.**
- **Using national capacities and systems is still not the default approach of UN entities when it comes to implementing activities at country level.**
- **National capacities were not being used as much as possible in procurement, financial systems, monitoring and reporting, and evaluation.**

The overall pattern of the responses in the governments and RC surveys is consistent. Overall, RCs were more strongly in agreement that the UN has contributed to strengthening national capacities in planning. **There is scope for the UN to become more effective in these respects, especially in regard to evaluation and management.**

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[2] https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/MAPS-Concept-Note-Oct-2015-ENDORSED-BY-UNDG-on-26.10.15.pdf

Figure 5. Strengthening National Capacities

Question: The UN has contributed to the strengthening of national capacities in:

	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
Planning - RC		48		50		2
Planning - PCG		17	72		9	
Management - RC		18	72		9	
Management - PCG		12	64		20	
Evaluation - RC		12	71		15	
Evaluation - PCG		6	69		22	
Statistics - RC		37	59			3
Statistics - PCG		13	67		10	

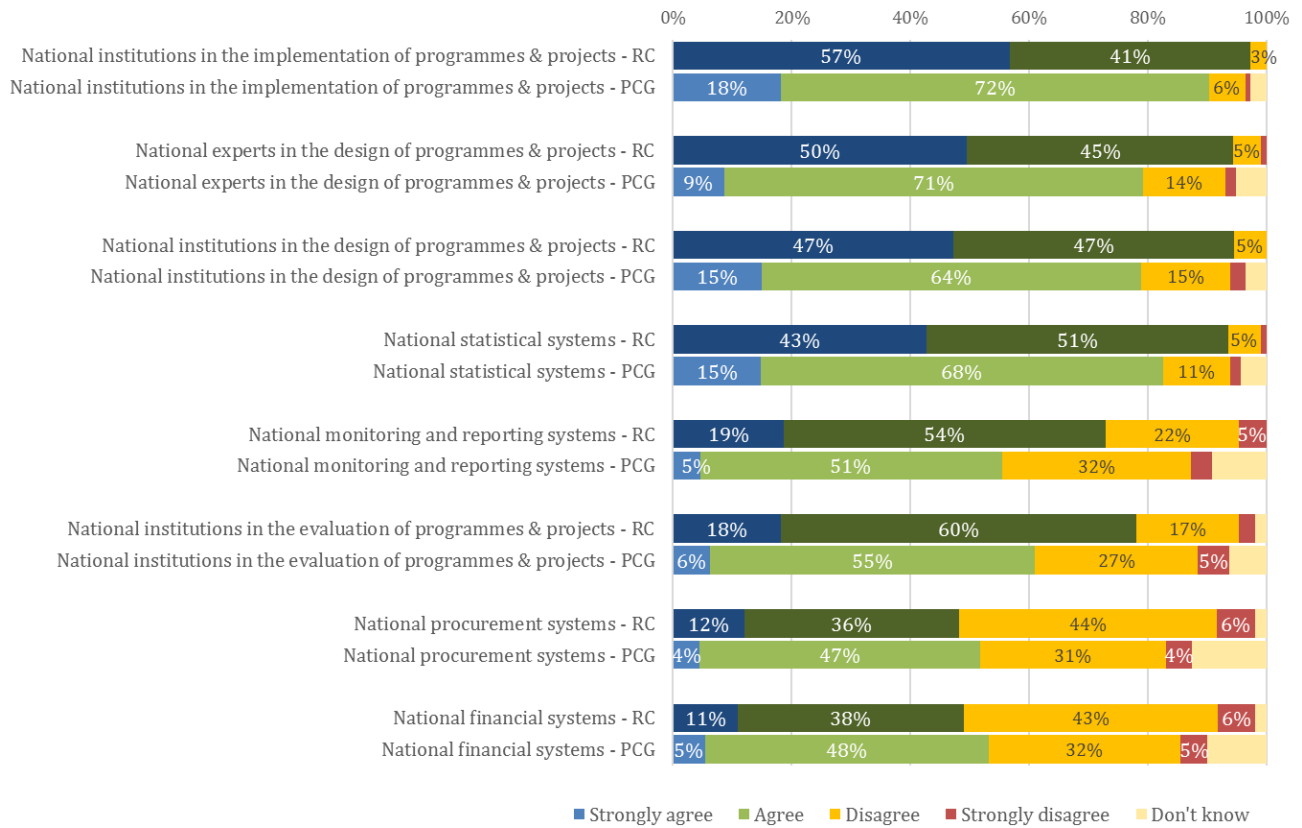■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (PCG)

RCs used the optional comments box to explain some constraints they face regarding strengthening national capacities. Several noted that capacity development tended to be handled by UN entities individually based on specific requests from the government departments with which they work. One RC reported that due to local conditions, resources were diverted away from capacity building into humanitarian action. Other challenges facing the UN system include poor inter-sectoral cooperation and insufficient inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, inefficient national monitoring and reporting systems, and underdeveloped evaluation capacities. High turnover of government staff and shortage of funds were also mentioned. The 'shortage of funds' issue could merit closer examination, as it may suggest that priority is being given to direct support at the expense of building capacities. It is also pertinent to question 15 below.

The surveys of RCs and governments have regularly asked about *using* national capacities. Figure 6 below reveals that **using national capacities and systems is still not the default approach of UN entities when it comes to implementing activities at country level.** For example, about half of RCs do not agree that national procurements systems and national financial system are used by the UN 'as much as possible'.   Governments rated the performance of the UN much less favorably than RCs in this area.

Figure 6. UNDS' use of national capacities and systems

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments

Evidently, there is scope to improve, which would no doubt be facilitated by a more coordinated approach on the UN side. It is relevant to note that RCs in DaO countries selected 'strongly agree' significantly more often than RCs in other countries regarding using national financial and procurement systems, national institutions in the implementation of programmes and projects, and national monitoring and reporting systems.

Challenges to increased use of national systems
Optional comments from RCs reinforced the picture of UN systems being used in preference to national systems, particularly in finance and procurement. One RC (in an upper middle-income country) explained that some national partners prefer the UN to handle procurement as its procedures are "faster and more straight-forward". The picture appears to vary from entity to entity: in the same country, UNFPA was said to use "national financial monitoring procedures and national procurement systems". In another country (an LDC), UNICEF was reported to use its own procurement procedures. Several RCs mentioned capacity gaps, political factors, lack of transparency and corruption as reasons why the UN uses its own finance and procurement systems. Some referred to the macro and micro-assessments carried out under HACT (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers) that determined national implementing partners to be "high risk". Some also mentioned steps being taken to address weaknesses in national systems.

Challenges to using PIUs less

The issue of using parallel implementation units (PIUs) is closely related to the topic of using national capacities and systems. In 2015, the proportion of RCs that agreed ('strongly agreed' and 'agreed') that the UNDS uses PIUs as little as possible was 62%, and in 2017 it was 70% (see figure 7). This trend is somewhat encouraging, but, given the modest rise, more years' data would be required before one could say there is a definite positive trend. The fact that a relatively high percentage (23%) of RCs still disagree remains a source of concern, as it reflects a significant amount of disagreement relative to the response pattern to other survey questions.

The main conclusion, as in previous years, is that there are considerable differences from one country to another, and the continuing prevalence of PIUs is evidently an issue in some countries. This finding is consistent with the calls by programme countries for the UN to make more use of national systems and capacities.

In their comments, RCs again highlighted limited government capacities, and issues of corruption and lack of transparency as reasons why the UN uses PIUs. Other instances of using PIUs that were mentioned include large projects financed by GEF, and politically sensitive projects such as election support. RCs in some countries commented that national capacities and systems are always used by the UN system. One RC explained that the UN "*avoids, wherever possible, the practice of establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions. This is supported by Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) that is being used by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.*"

Figure 7. Use of parallel implementation units (PIUs), 2014-2017
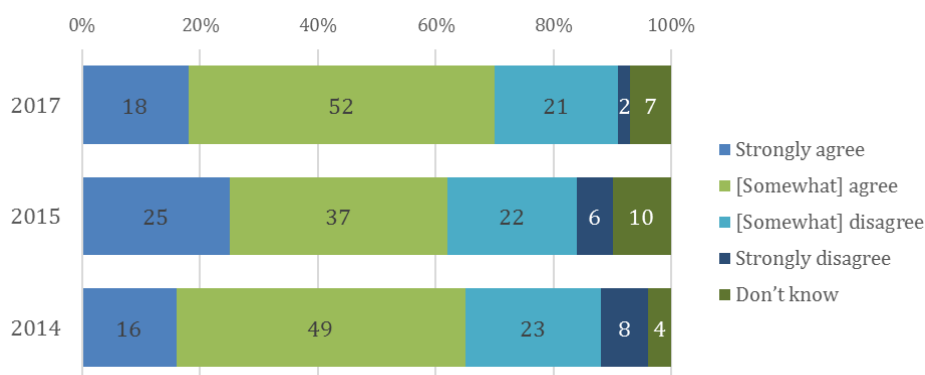
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

D. UN Development Assistance Framework

17. Is the period of the UNDAF (or equivalent instrument) aligned with the Government's planning and budgeting cycle?
18. To what extent did the UNCT consult the following stakeholders in the development of the UNDAF: i) parliamentarians; ii) civil society; iii) IFIs; iv) bilateral and multilateral actors; v) private sector?
19. Does the UNDAF address how the UNCT will reach the furthest behind first?
20. Please very briefly highlight any innovative strategies in the UNDAF (or equivalent planning framework) that the UNCT is pursuing to reach the furthest behind first.
21. Does the UNDAF substantively address the needs of persons with disabilities?
22. Is the current UNDAF process simpler compared to four years ago?

> *23. Please briefly mention how the CPD and UNDAF clearance process could be sped up, simplified, or improved.*
> *24. Has the UNCT conducted a mapping of overall financial flows as part of the support to the national government in delivering the SDGs*

Key findings
- **There has been little progress in aligning UNDAF cycles with the government's planning and budgeting cycle;**
- **A majority of RCs believe that the UNCT ensured 'to a great extent' the participation of civil society in the development of the UNDAF; less extensive was participation by other actors, namely parliamentarians, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral actors and the private sector**
- **A substantial majority of RCs agreed that the UNDAF in their country of assignment addresses how the UNCT will reach the furthest behind first;**
- **Two-thirds of RCs stated that the UNDAF addresses the needs of persons with disabilities;**
- **Is the current UNDAF process simpler compared to four years ago?**
- **Mapping of overall financial flows in countries has so far been done to only a limited extent, but many RCs expect to do this in the near future**

One of the reasons given by RCs in previous surveys for a lack of full alignment of the UNDAF with national needs and priorities was misalignment between the period covered by the UNDAF (hereafter, includes "or equivalent") and the national planning cycle. Thus, since 2013 the RC surveys have included a question to explore this matter. The responses to the question are shown below.

Table 10. UNDAF alignment with government cycle

Is the UNDAF aligned with the Government's planning cycle?	2017	2015	2014	2013
	%	%	%	%
Yes	62	66	65	53
No, but we plan to align the period of the next UNDAF with the government's cycle	16	21	31	22
No, and there are no plans to align with the government's cycle	17	10		
Not applicable, the UNDAF or equivalent framework is not being used in the country	5	3	4	25[3]
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Alignment with national planning processes is a significant factor in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of UN development cooperation. The table shows that **there has not been much notable progress in aligning UNDAF cycles with the planning cycle of Governments.** Given the duration of UNDAF cycles it is perhaps not surprising that progress is slow, however there also remains a significant number of countries where there are no plans to align the UNDAF with the Government's planning cycle. In some cases, good reasons for lack of alignment were given, such as the absence of a government medium term plan or strategy with which to align. RCs covering multiple
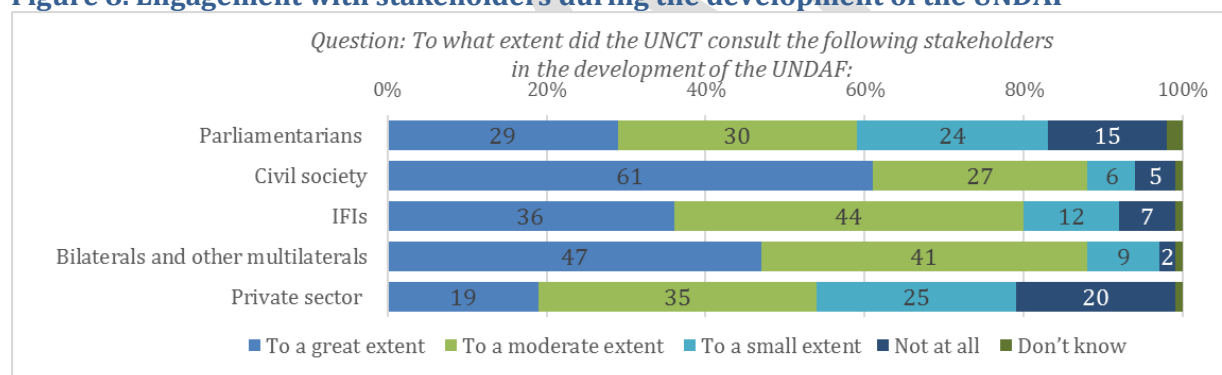
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[3] This figure cannot be compared with the other figures on this row, because the option in 2013 was simply 'Not applicable' – without the qualification that there is no UNDAF or equivalent – and this led many more respondents to check the box.

countries and having a multi-country UNDAF noted that alignment with the cycles of all countries is impossible. On the other hand, a few RCs mentioned that they were pressured to have a five-year UNDAF although the government's cycle is different, such as three years or six years. In this regard, it may be recalled that the UNDAF guidelines (Part I) issued by UNDG in 2010 advocated synchronization with the government cycle. The new (2017) UNDAF Guidelines also indicate that UNDAF durations can be flexible, stating that "*Extensions of UNDAFs can be requested from the Regional UNDG Team to ensure better alignment to the national planning cycle or to adapt to other national circumstances, such as the national electoral calendar or a crisis situation.*" RCs in several countries reported that they are doing just that. At the same time, the notion that an UNDAF must have a five-year duration seems to persist, even in headquarters, so it seems that more needs to be done to ensure that the policy on alignment of cycles is consistently applied.

Engagement with stakeholders during development of UNDAF
The QCPR encouraged the United Nations development system to intensify its collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders (2016 QCPR, OP22) and the Secretary-General has noted (in A/72/124/OP41) that "*As reflected in Goal 17, the sustainable development agenda can only be realized with a strong commitment to partnerships at all levels between governments, private sector, civil society and others.*" In this context, survey respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the UNCT consulted each of these groups. Based on the survey feedback, engagement with civil society during the development of the UNDAF appears to be strong, while there is weaker engagement with the private sector and parliamentarians. The full results are shown in the figure below.

Figure 8. Engagement with stakeholders during the development of the UNDAF

Question: To what extent did the UNCT consult the following stakeholders in the development of the UNDAF:

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
Parliamentarians	29	30	24	15	
Civil society	61	27	6	5	
IFIs	36	44	12	7	
Bilaterals and other multilaterals	47	41	9	2	
Private sector	19	35	25	20	

Under optional comments, RCs mentioned some factors constraining engagement, including political instability, and the absence of a parliament. A few RCs explained that the UNDAF was developed largely with the central government, and they did not encourage wide consultations. Two RCs noted that they have no UNDAF. One RC specifically mentioned plans to increase engagement with the private sector. Another RC pointed out that the list of stakeholders could be expanded to include the judiciary, governments (national and local) and academia.

Addressing the furthest behind first
RCs were asked whether the UNDAF in their country of assignment "addresses how the UNCT will reach the furthest behind first." 86% of RC answered 'yes' to this questions.

RCs were invited to highlight innovative strategies in the UNDAF (or equivalent planning framework) that the UNCT is pursuing in order to reach the furthest behind first. However, the strategies mentioned reflected traditional approaches, as can be seen below:

- enhancing community involvement in the definition of target groups; focusing on the poorest regions of a country or on a conflict-affected region;
- 'social inclusion' being an important theme of the UNDAF;
- improving data collection in order to plan and measure progress; also improving public access to such data; taking a human rights based approach;
- conducting a 'Public Perception Survey' around the SDGs;
- establishing a UN office in the most disadvantaged region;
- addressing youth unemployment; including a specific UNDAF outcome focusing on indigenous people, women and youth;
- focusing on ethnic minorities; involving a very wide range of stakeholders in the CCA process;
- undertaking vulnerability assessments; and,
- strengthening linkages between development and humanitarian actions of the UN system.

Addressing needs of persons with disabilities
65% of RCs stated that the UNDAF does address the needs of persons with disabilities, while 35% answered 'no'. One RC explained: "*The major intervention on the part of the UNDAF in this regard is towards aligning national policies on persons with disabilities with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The primary thrust of this programme is in persuading the government to change from a medical model of disability to social model where issues around social protection and inclusion are also addressed.*" Other RCs also mentioned that advocacy was the principal area of action.

A few RCs mentioned substantive programmes that focused on persons with disabilities, while other RCs mentioned that the UNDAF had outcomes with indicators disaggregated by persons with disabilities; one added that the indicators include: "*employment rate, enrolment in social protection scheme, access to primary education, and implementation of recommendations of Human Rights mechanisms.*"   Several RCs explained that while persons with disabilities were not mentioned explicitly, the needs of persons with disabilities would be addressed through the outcomes on social inclusion and reaching the most disadvantaged.

Simplifying the UNDAF process
Just under half of RCs indicated that the UNDAF process is simpler compared to four years ago. Some of the reasons offered were: fewer outcomes and therefore simpler and more strategic; replacing the UNDAF action plan with joint annual work plans was a significant improvement; the new UNDAF guidelines oriented around the 2030 Agenda strengthen the UNDAF process.

Table 11 – UNDAF process simpler than four years ago

Is UNDAF process simpler than four years ago?	2017 %
Yes	45
No, it was simpler four years ago	12
No, it is about the same	31
Don't know	12
Total	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

While 12% of RCs indicated that the UNDAF process has gotten more complex over the past four years, the reasons given for this could be judged as positive developments. For instance, RCs highlighted that the calls for more inclusiveness and participation, the need to work in more cross-

sectoral ways, and more inter-entity monitoring and evaluation contributed to the process being more complicated now than 4 years ago.

Among the many thoughtful responses to this question, one suggestion was that UNCT members consult with each other at the earliest stage of developing their individual country programmes and plans, to identify potential synergies and joint programming opportunities and to avoid duplication of efforts. Another suggestion was to integrate CPD requirements into the UNDAF stream. In the same spirit, several RCs advocated approval of UNDAF and CPDs at the same time. Another recommendation was that governments approve the joint annual work plans (JWPs) instead of individual entity work plans. Several RCs advocated scrapping individual entity CPDs, and using the UNDAF and JWPs in their place.

Mapping Financial Flows of a Country
Only about one-in-ten RCs indicated that the UNCT has conducted a mapping of the country's overall financial flows. Elaborating on their responses, many RCs mentioned that the UNCT intends to carry out such an exercise with their next UNDAF or in connection with costing the SDGs. One such RC, for example, explained that the Government was in the process of developing a National Action Plan for the SDGs, which would also entail a costing of the SDGs and overall budget required. Based on this information, the UNCT expects to work with the Government in identifying gaps in financing.

Table 12 – Mapping Financial Flows

Has the UNCT conducted a mapping of overall financial flows to the country?	2017 %
Yes	10
Yes, partially	33
No, but the UNCT plans to do it in the next UNDAF	44
No, the UNCT has no plans to do so	13
Total	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

E. Access to data

25. Please indicate whether the UNCT has access to <u>official government data</u> on: i) income level; ii) sex; iii) age; iv) disability; v) ethnicity; vi) religion; vii) race.
26. Please indicate whether the UNCT has access to <u>non-official data</u> on (including from academia, NGOs, UN and other multi-laterals): i) income level; ii) sex; iii) age; iv) disability; v) ethnicity; vi) religion; vii) race.
27. Compared to four years ago, how closely have UN entities worked together to support capacity–building on disaggregated data collection and analysis?

Key findings
- **Data disaggregation around the dimensions of racial diversity, religion and disability remains limited;**
- **Progress is visible in terms of more integrated work for capacity building around data, although room for more action remains**

As shown in the figure below, the majority of UNCTs felt they had access to adequate official government data on age, income level and sex. However, overall, official data on religion, ethnicity, race and disabilities tended to be less than adequate or simply unavailable. The findings mirror

corresponding results in previous surveys. RCs also suggested that data from non-official sources is generally no more adequate than official data (see figure 9).

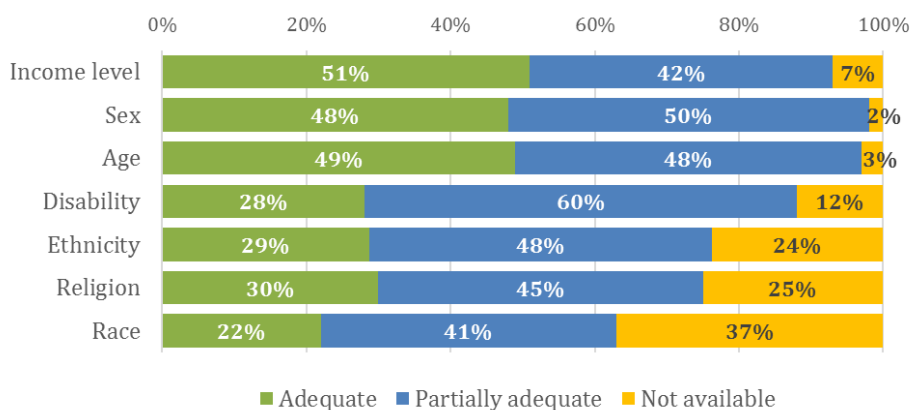### Figure 9. Degree of access to (different categories) of official data

Question: Please indicate whether the UNCT has access to official government data on:
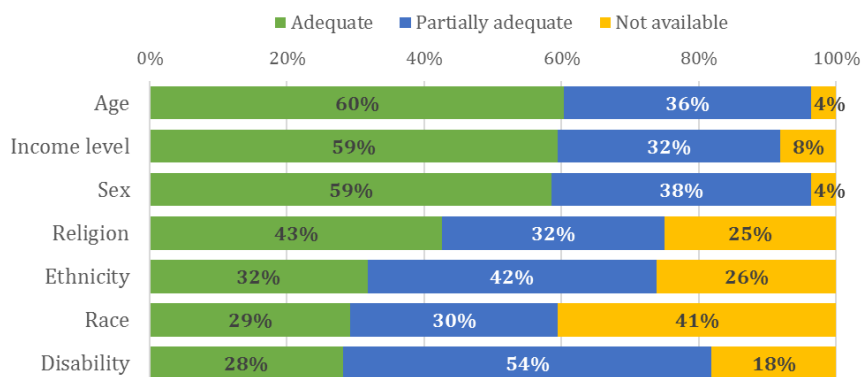
Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Figure 10. Degree of access to (different categories of) non-official data

Question: Please indicate whether the UNCT has access access to non-official data on (including from academia, NGOs, UN and other multi-laterals):
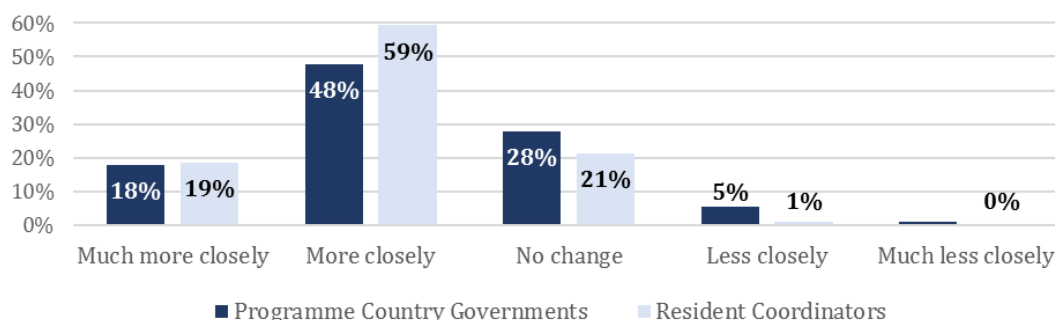

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Progress is visible in terms of more integrated work for capacity building around data, although room for more action remains. As shown in the figure below, 78% of RCs agreed that UN entities are working more closely together compared to four years ago, in order to support capacity building on disaggregated data collection and analysis. As tended to be the case for many questions, the view of governments were last positive.

Figure 11. Collaboration among entities 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:

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

F. South-South Cooperation

> **28. Does the UNDAF substantively address South-South and triangular cooperation?**
> **29. To what extent does the current UNDAF or equivalent framework include programming of support to South-South and triangular cooperation?**
> **30. Does the government have activities in the area of South-South cooperation?**
> **31. Has the government requested the UN system to support its cooperation with other developing countries?**
> **32. As far as you know, what type of support has been requested?**
> **33. What have been the main challenges, if any, for the UNCT in providing the requested support for south-south and triangular cooperation?**
> **34. Is the UNCT taking a collective approach to South-South cooperation?**

> <u>**Key findings**</u>
> - **There appears to be an increase in the demand for SSC support in two areas: financial support, and capacity building for management of SSC;**
> - **The dominant reported challenges in terms of SSC remains lack of resources and capacity in the UNCT.**

Over half, or 56%, of RCs indicated that the UNDAF "substantively addresses" South-South and triangular cooperation, while the other 44% said it did not. Not surprisingly, RCs in countries with significant humanitarian challenges were more likely to indicate that the UNDAF did not substantively address South-South and triangular cooperation.

Under optional comments several RCs mentioned that South-South cooperation is supported by individual UNCT members, and addressed in some country programme documents, but not by the UN system as a whole. A few RCs commented upon the level of interest on the government side, which varied from disinterest on the one hand to very substantial engagement on the other hand.

RCs who answered that the UNDAF does substantively address South-South and triangular cooperation were then asked "to what extent does the current UNDAF or equivalent framework

include programming of support to South-South and triangular cooperation". The responses are shown in the table below.

As per their optional comments, several RCs mentioned specific examples of relevant programming, involving support to regional or sub-regional institutions or initiatives, such as ASEAN, SAARC, and the multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (UN *MSDF*) in the Caribbean.

Table 13 – Programming of south-south and triangular cooperation

Extent to which the UNDAF or equivalent framework includes programming of support to South-South cooperation?	#	%
To a great extent	14	22
To a moderate extent	39	60
To a small extent	12	18
Not at all	0	0
Total	65	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The survey also explored the extent of the respective government's interest and engagement in south-south and triangular cooperation. The responses to both questions are given below.

Table 14 – Government activities in South-South cooperation and UN support

	Does government have activities in South-South cooperation?		Has the government requested UN system support?	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	95	87	82	84
No	5	5	14	14
Don't know	9	8	2	2
Total	109	100	98	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

As can be seen, 84% of RCs indicated that the government had requested UN support. Those RC's were then asked about the type of support that was being requested. The responses are shown in the table below, along with the responses to the same question in 2014 in 2015.

Table 15. Types of support requested with South-South cooperation, 2014-2017

Type of support	2017 %	2015 %	2014 %
Provision of access to knowledge and expertise of other developing countries	88	86	84
Identification of cooperation partners	51	56	56
Delivery of cross-border or inter-regional projects or programmes	42	46	35
Support towards regional integration	47	46	38
Financial support	55	37	38
Capacity building on management of south-south cooperation	43	32	30
Support for negotiation capacity development	27	29	25
Serving as an administrative agent to manage cooperation projects	25	21	21
Others (please specify in the comment box below)	9	1	6

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The pattern of responses is similar over the three years, although **there appears to be an increase in the demand for support in two areas: firstly, financial support, which echoes the comments**

by governments that financial constraints are an obstacle to engaging in more south-south cooperation. And secondly, capacity building on management of South-South cooperation.

In their supplementary comments, RCs mentioned specific initiatives on which the UN had provided support; one RC offered the following insightful comment: "*Requests have not always been explicit, but the Government has often been receptive when UN Entities have suggested South-South and triangular cooperation as an alternative to the traditional model. Counterparts still find it difficult at times to think of themselves as potential sources of South-South cooperation as opposed to recipients.*" RCs were also asked about the challenges for the UNCT in providing the requested support for South-South and triangular cooperation. This follow-up question was addressed to the RCs who answered the previous two questions. The responses to this question in 2017 are shown below, along with the responses in 2014 and 2015 (note that RCs could select more than one option/challenge).

Table 16. Challenges for the UNCT in providing support for South-South cooperation, 2014-2017

Type of challenge	2017 #	2017 %	2015 #	2015 %	2014 #	2014 %
Lack of dedicated resources and capacity	65	81	55	61	39	64
Nature of the request	19	24	18	17	10	16
Business rules and procedures	17	21	15	20	10	16
Need for corporate strategy and policy	24	30	14	16	15	25
Other (Please specify)	13	16	22	24	14	23

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The responses over time are similar in that **lack of resources and capacity remains the dominant challenge.** The need for corporate strategy and policy, which appeared less significant in 2015 emerged again as the second most important challenge.

Among the optional comments provided, RCs reiterated the funding constraint, and also mentioned the lack of agreed procedures for implementing South-South cooperation. Mention was also made of the difficulty in assessing the impact of South-South cooperation activities, echoing a comment by one of the programme country governments.

On the topic of collective UN action on South-South cooperation versus a single entity approach, RCs were specifically asked about the extent of each approach. **The data shows overwhelmingly that South-South activities are typically carried out by UN entities independently and not jointly.**

Table 17 – Collective or single-entity approaches

Existence of collective approaches to UN support for South-South cooperation	#	%
The UNCT has an agreed strategy to support joint activities in this area	4	4
Some entities carry out South-South activities jointly	28	26
South-South activities are carried out by entities independently	76	70
Total	108	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

In the optional comments, several RCs saw potential for pursuing more coordinated approaches or referred to efforts that were underway to improve coordination in this area.

III. EFFECTIVENESS

A. Programmatic and operational coherence and effectiveness

35. To what extent do the results groups or theme groups or joint teams or programme coordination groups form part of a national coordination mechanism?
36. In regard to chairing of the results groups, please select one of the following: i) all groups are co-chaired by the Government; ii) some groups are co-chaired by the Government; iii) none of the groups are co-chaired by the Government.
37. In regard to chairing of results groups on the UN side: i) all groups are chaired or co-chaired by a UNCT Head of Agency; ii) some groups are chaired or co-chaired by a UNCT Head of Agency; iii) none of the groups are chaired or co-chaired by a UNCT Head of Agency.

Key findings
- **UN results groups (or other UN coordination groups) that form part of a national coordination mechanism are found in about two-thirds of all programme countries;**
- **There is room to increase national ownership of results groups;**
- **There is scope for more results groups to be chaired or co-chaired by a Heads of Agency (UNCT member) – to increase collective UN ownership;**

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) envisage a major role for results groups in programme implementation. Results groups are one of the 15 core elements of the SOPs, aiming to ensure the necessary inter-agency cooperation at the UNDAF *implementation* stage. With these groups in place, it is thought that the UNDAF itself can become more of a strategic document, pitched at the outcome level, rather than an operational document. The involvement of national partners in results groups is strongly recommended to ensure their relevance to national development efforts and national ownership of UN system activities.

A question on results groups and national coordination mechanisms has featured in the RC survey since 2014. The results for each year are shown below. The first point to note is the small number of RCs that stated 'not applicable', which reflects the widespread adoption of results groups.

Table 18. Results groups and national coordination mechanisms

To what extent are results groups (or other coordination groups) part of a national coordination mechanism?	2017		2015		2014	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All these groups are part of a national coordination mechanism	24	22	23	20	5	6
Some of these groups are part of a national coordination mechanism	46	42	47	41	30	39
None of these groups are part of a national coordination mechanism	28	26	34	29	24	31
Not applicable	11	10	12	10	19	24
Total	109	100	116	100	78	100

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The second point is that **the growth in the number of countries where all or some results groups are part of a national coordination mechanism has slowed**. Overall, there appears to be much

scope to enhance national ownership of results groups. It is notable that of the twenty-four countries where all groups are part of a national coordination mechanism, eleven are DaO countries. Strengthening national ownership seems to be a factor in the desire of programme countries to adopt DaO.

To obtain further insights into the ownership of UN system activities, the survey explored the leadership of the results groups. These questions were answered by all RCs other than those who replied 'not applicable' in the previous question.

Table 19. Government chairing of results groups, 2014-2017

Government co-chairing and NGO participation in results groups or other coordination groups		RC responses			
		All %	Some %	None %	N/A %
Government co-chairs	*2014 – 78 responses*	17	19	41	23
	2015 – 116 responses	23	34	34	9
	2017 – 98 responses	22	38	29	11[4]

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Similar to the previous question, **the data appears to show a gradual trend of increased Government participation in co-chairing of results groups**. Under optional comments several RCs mentioned steps being taken to involve the government in the future. Others mentioned that results groups are co-chaired by the government but the (less formal) theme groups are not. Several RCs explained that there are sector working groups chaired by the government as part of the local aid coordination architecture, and while UNDAF results groups are not formally integrated into those groups, participants from the UNDAF results groups regularly participate in meetings of those groups, providing technical support and ensuring alignment.

Designating a UNCT member that is the head of their entity in country to chair or co-chair each results group is a significant aspect of 'One Programme' in the SOPs aims to enhance the status and therefore the effectiveness of the group. The table below shows that it is common for entity heads to assume leadership roles in results groups, which is a positive indication of collaboration within the country team. As shown in the PCG survey, governments of programme countries also strongly support this approach, particularly where it means that the UNCT designates a single agency to play a leadership role in relation to all UNDS support in a given results area (corresponding to an UNDAF outcome.)

Table 20. Chairing of results groups by a member of the UNCT (Head of Entity), 2014-2017

Extent to which results groups are chaired or co-chaired by a UNCT member		RC responses				
		All %	Some %	None %	N/A %	Total %
Head of entity co-chairs	*2014 (78 responses)*	60	24	4	12	100
	2015 (116 responses)	66	26	4	3	100
	2017 (98 responses)	58	28	3	11	100

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Regarding the countries where the RC reported 'none', one explained that the UNCT intended that all groups will be chaired or co-chaired by a UNCT member when the next UNDAF begins, while another RC mentioned that the results groups were all chaired by a deputy head of entity. In the countries

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[4] Based on response to question 35.

where the RCs said 'some', several RCs explained that for some groups, such as on human rights, gender, or M&E, the chair was someone with deep knowledge of the subject area. Another RC explained that the UNCT was very small and it was not practical for a UNCT member to chair every group. Overall, it seems there is scope for more UNCT members to chair results groups in a number of countries.

B. Delivering As One

38. Please indicate the status of the country in regard to Delivering as
One (DaO): i) original DaO pilot country; ii) not a pilot, but implementing all elements of DaO;
iii) implementing some elements of DaO; iv) not implementing any elements of DaO; v)
Government has requested or is actively considering DaO.

Key findings
- **Almost all countries are now applying at least some elements of DaO**

In 2006, a major review took place, and led inter alia to the Delivering as One (DaO) approach, which is a voluntary strengthening of coordination arrangements at the field level. The first DaO pilots were conducted in 2007, and as at December 2017, some 59 countries had formally requested that DaO be adopted in their country. In 2014, the SOPs were introduced, as mandatory for DaO countries and voluntary for other countries. Given that the SOPs are UNDG-agreed measures aimed at promoting coherence across the UNCT, the UNDS has since been encouraged to progressively implement the SOPs irrespective of whether DaO has been requested (A/RES/71/243/OP62).

A question on DaO status was asked in the 2017 survey as well as the RC surveys conducted in 2013 and 2015, with some differences in the wording of the answer options, as explained in the footnotes to the table below.

Table 21. Country status as regards Delivering as One (DaO), 2013-2017

Status of the country in regard to Delivering as One (DaO)	2017		2015		2013	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Original DaO pilot country	8	7	8	7	8	7
Not a pilot, but implementing all elements of DaO[5]	21	19	14	12	26	25
Implementing some elements of DaO	70	64	69	59	38	35
Government has requested or is actively considering DaO	5	5	10	9	9	8
Not implementing any elements of DaO[6]	6	5	15	13	28	25
Total number of respondents	110	100	116	100	109	100

Source: 2013, 2015, and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The table depicts that **almost all countries are now applying at least some elements of DaO**: the proportion of countries implementing or planning to implement all or some aspects of DaO (the first four rows in the table) grew from 75% to 95% between 2013 and 2017.

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[5] In 2013, the option was 'Self-starter'. The introduction of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) raised the bar in terms of what constitutes "implementing all elements of DaO". Some 'self-starter' countries did not check "implementing all elements of DaO" in 2015, reflecting that they were not (yet) implementing all the elements in the SOP package.
[6] In 2013, the option was 'Government is not considering DaO'.

As such, in their comments, many RCs mentioned the UNCT's commitment to implement at least some of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), whether the government had expressed interest in DaO or not. Other RCs mentioned a specific government request for DaO which the UNCT was acting upon. Several RCs mentioned plans to implement the SOPs that relate to business operations. For example, one explained: "*Although not a DAO country, the UNCT has adopted the HACT Framework and elements of the Business Operations Strategy (common services, common procurement). A HACT working group and an OMT is operational in the country. Within the OMT, sub-committees for harmonization of Procurement and HR functions are also operational*." Joint resource mobilization and joint communications strategies were also mentioned several times.

C. Standard Operating Procedures

The UNDG has compiled data on the extent to which the SOPs are being applied by UNCTs. The chart below illustrates the progress in adopting the SOPs between 2015 and 2017. **It can be seen that there is generally some progress in applying the SOPs, and there is considerably more progress in some areas than in others.** The widespread if uneven take-up of the SOPs explains why an overwhelming majority of RCs report that their UNCTs are already implementing some or all elements of DaO.

Figure 12. Implementation of the SOPs
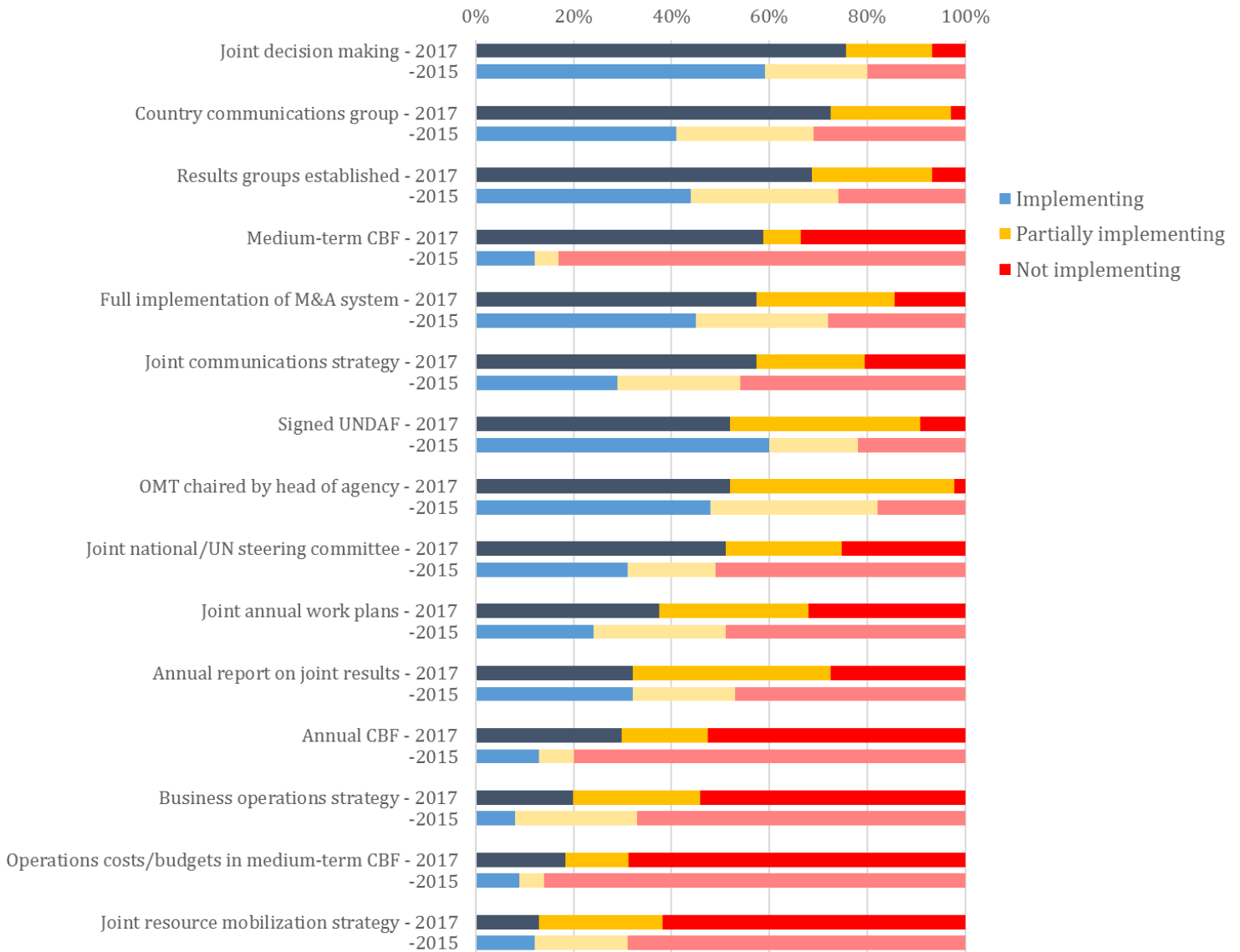
Source: UNDG IMS

As may be seen, the uptake of the SOPs varies greatly, so while UNDAFs are nearly universal, there is much to do in terms of the other requirements or recommended practices; in particular, joint resource mobilization strategies, Common Budgetary Frameworks (CBFs), and Business Operations Strategies (BOS).

RCs were also asked about the information and support received from HQ in regard specifically to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the Business Operations Strategy (BOS). The responses are shown below.

Table 22 – Support from HQ with the SOPs and BOS

How adequate has the information and support received from headquarters been on implementation of:	The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	A Business Operations Strategy (BOS)
	%	**%**
Very adequate	**32**	**27**
Adequate	**58**	**61**
Inadequate	**9**	**11**
No support or information received	**1**	**1**

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The data shows that most RCs judged the support received from headquarters on implementing the SOPs and a BOS to have been 'adequate' or 'very adequate', although around 10% felt it had not been adequate. More concerns were expressed about support in regard to the BOS than to the SOPs in general. Echoing the comments of some governments, a few RCs mentioned lack of commitment on the part of some entities as a reason for limited progress.

A question on whether there was "an improved focus on common results" was included in both PCG (Q22) and RC surveys. The results from the two surveys are shown below.

Figure 13 – Focus on common results
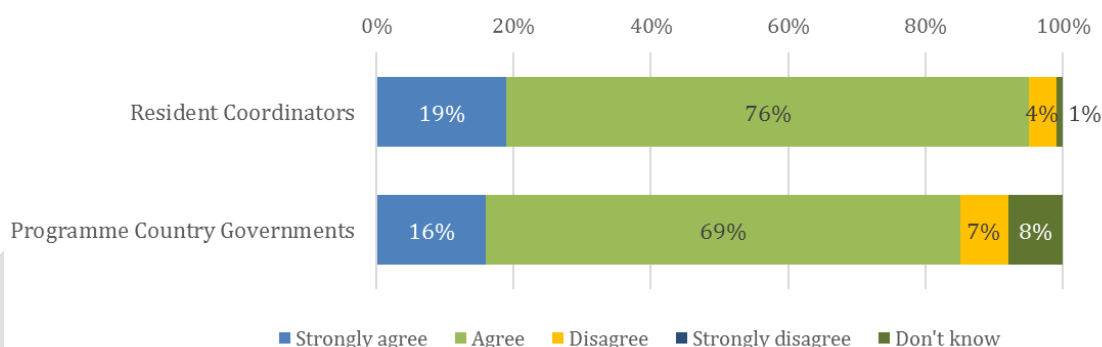
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (PCG)

Most respondents, especially RCs, expressed a favourable view on this topic. Among the comments, some RCs pointed to improved UNCT processes, collaboration relating to the SDGs, joint programmes, and joint work plans, although some others commented that the improvements had yet to be translated into concrete actions. One RC mentioned that the UNCT had developed a draft scorecard on levels of cooperation and efficiency of common results. Some programme country governments mentioned that the improvement was linked to a specific project or programme, or attributed it to DaO, or to a UN House.

D. Communicating as One

41. Does the UNCT have a joint communications strategy?
42. In your opinion, to what extent does the strategy promote adequate linkages between the UN's normative and operational activities?
43. If a joint communications strategy does not exist, please state the reasons briefly.

The notion of 'speaking with one voice' has been as an initiative for many years. Feedback from the 2014 RC survey served as a baseline for assessing progress in aspects of cooperation on communication topics. The topics included the existence of a UN communications group under the UNCT and the existence of a common UN website, among others. Tracking of performance in some of these areas is managed by UNDG/DOCO through the Information Management System (IMS), and summarised in the figure on the SOPs (figure 12).

On question 41 of the survey, the data reveals that 80% of UNCTs now have a joint communications strategy, up from 60% in 2014. The table also reveals that the recent increase in UNCTs with a joint communications strategy has been taking place mainly in non-DaO countries, reflecting the fact that most DaO countries already had such strategies, as well as the efforts in nearly all countries to implement at least some of the SOPs.

Table 23 UNCTs with a Joint Communications Strategy, 2014-17

UNCT has a Joint Communications Strategy		Yes	
		#	%
2017	Non-DaO countries	54	76
	DaO countries	34	87
	Total	88	80
2015	Non-DaO countries	42	58
	DaO countries	33	77
	Total	75	65
2014	Non-DaO countries	24	47
	DaO countries	21	88
	Total	45	60

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Responding to why a joint communication strategy does not exist, most RCs referred to steps that were underway. **Challenges encountered in preparing a joint communication strategy included difficulty in reaching a consensus among members of the UNCT, staff changes and limited staff capacities in the UNCT.** Two RCs explained that there is a communications group and it has a work plan, but no strategy as such. One RC pointed out that each entity had its own communications strategy, although they did come together for a joint approach on humanitarian matters.

The RCs that responded they had a communication strategy were asked the extent it promotes linkages between the UN's normative and operational activities, and the results are shown below.

Table 24. Communications strategy and normative-operational linkages, 2014-2017

To what extent does the strategy promote adequate linkages between the UN's normative and operational activities:	2017 %	2015 %	2014 %
To a large extent	32	49	49
To a moderate extent	51	41	33
To a small extent	16	7	18
Not at all	1	3	0
Total	100	100	100

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

While there has been a steady increase in RCs that reported the existence of a joint communications strategy, this does not seem to have been accompanied by improvements in terms of linking normative and operational activities. It seems possible that the raised expectations that have come with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda could have contributed to the more modest assessment of the strategies in 2017.

Some RCs mentioned that the UNCT was currently working on such a strategy to promote linkages between the UN's normative and operational activities, while one mentioned that the achieving appropriate linkages needed core resources, which were extremely limited. Two RCs pointed to a lack of interest on the part of some entity headquarters as the reason for the absence of a strategy.

E.   The Resident Coordinator System

44. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Resident Coordinator has the following attributes to avoid duplication of efforts within the United Nations country team: i) sufficient capacity; ii) sufficient prerogative?
45. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Resident Coordinator has the capacity to access the expertise available within the United Nations development system to address national needs, priorities and challenges?
46. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the last four years, the UN country team has reduced overlap and duplication of work?
47. To what extent do you agree or disagree that all UNCT members report to the resident coordinator regularly on: i) resource mobilization; ii) programme implementation on performance of UNDAF elements by the entity?
48. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Resident Coordinator is empowered within the UN country team to do the following: i) make final decisions on the strategic objectives in the UNDAF; ii) substantially increase common resource mobilization; iii) distribute common resources?
49. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Resident Coordinator receives sufficiently regular and useful information from UNCT members to ensure effective communication with the Government regarding UNDS activities in the field?
50. Please mention briefly any challenges encountered as well as suggestions on how to ensure that the UNCT regularly provides the RC with necessary updates:
51. On average, how frequently do you receive such updates from UNCT members?
52. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the UN system field representatives in general enjoy sufficient delegated authority to respond effectively and efficiently to national needs and priorities?

53. To what extent has the Resident Coordinator contributed to the performance appraisal of UNCT members in the past 12 months?
54. To what extent does the job descriptions of UNCT members, as heads of agencies, recognize the leadership role of the Resident Coordinator to strategically position the UN within the country:
55. Please indicate the proportion of UNCT agency heads for whom you have provided a formal input into their performance assessments in your capacity as Resident Coordinator.
56. Please indicate which of the following positions UNDP has in the country? Please select all that apply: i) Country Director; ii) Deputy Resident Representative; iii) Other second-ranking official, if there is neither a CD nor a DRR in the country.
57. Has the RC/RR signed delegation of authority letters on UNDP business to the Deputy UNDP official on: i) resource mobilisation; ii) responsibility for operational activities?

Key findings
- **RCs have consistently reported that they have limited capacity and prerogative when asked about the extent to which they are able to avoid duplication of efforts across the UNCT;**
- **Most governments would like to see the RC playing a stronger role;**
- **Similar to the responses in previous surveys, it is clear that RCs do not always find it easy to access entity expertise, notwithstanding the UNDG policy on the subject;**
- **The extent of disagreement on whether UNCT members report regularly to the RC on resource mobilization is very striking;**
- **RCs pointed out that they do not have the authority to require entities to provide information, and that systems for providing information efficiently are lacking;**
- **Most RCs agree that UNCT members in general enjoy sufficient delegated authority, while noting that there is much variation from entity to entity.**

RCs reflect challenges in terms of their capacity and prerogative to fulfill their terms of reference. At the same time, several other RCs mentioned excellent cooperation in the UNCT, which they noted, tends to be due more to personal relations and goodwill than to any headquarters' requirement. RCs were asked to weigh in on this issue; and their perceptions are largely consistent with these findings, as shown in the table below.

Table 25. RC capacity and prerogative

	RC has sufficient capacity	RC has sufficient prerogative	
	RCs	RCs	Governments
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	23	15	27
Agree	37	34	56
Disagree	27	33	8
Strongly disagree	12	16	0
Don't know	1	2	9
Total	100	100	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Access to entity expertise is one of the elements of the UNDG's Management and Accountability system (MAS) of the UNDG's Resident Coordinator system. The MAS is covered in greater detail from question 42.

Table 26 – RC access to entity expertise

RC has capacity to access UN system expertise	%
Strongly agree	21
Agree	52
Disagree	21
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	1
Total	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Similar to the responses in previous surveys, it is clear that RCs do not always find it easy to access entity expertise, notwithstanding the UNDG policy on the subject. While many agreed, RCs emphasised that their ability to access expertise was based on the good-will of both the UN entities and the RC, noting that there are no mandatory accountability or reporting lines, no formal mechanism to empower the RC, and no incentives for entities to cooperate. Other challenges were a tendency in entities to give priority to their individual programmes, and limited capacities in RC offices to follow up.

A similar question on this topic has been included in past RC surveys. For comparison, the results from the questions asked in 2014 and 2015 are shown below. Although the questions are not identical, they address the same issue and the responses seem to be similar, with roughly 20% of RCs being fully satisfied, 20% dissatisfied and the remainder in the middle.

**Table 27. RC access to entities' technical resources, 2014-2015**

In-kind contributions to the RC system - ease of access to entities' technical resources	2015 %	2014 %
Have accessed the technical resources of all entities without difficulty	17	21
Have accessed the technical resources of some entities without difficulty	63	64
Have generally encountered difficulty in accessing entities' technical resources	20	15

Source: 2014 and 2015 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Some 84% of RCs indicated there has been a reduction in the overlap and duplication of the work of the UN system compared to four years ago, however, of these only 9% of RCs 'strongly agreed' that this had been the case.

Figure 14 – Reduction in the overlap and duplication of work of the UN system

*Question: In the last four years, the UN country team has
reduced overlap and duplication of work:*

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know
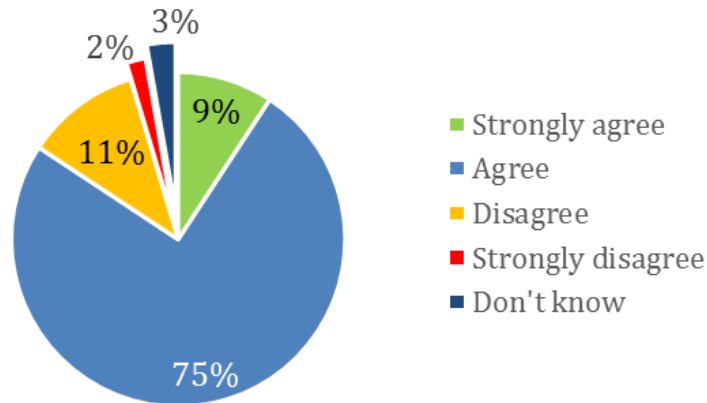
Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

33 RCs provided optional comments, many of them explaining that while they 'agree' that there has been reduced overlap, the reduction was "achieved to some degree but more needs to be done".

Other RCs provided concrete examples where overlap had been addressed.   Joint annual work planning in results groups and theme groups were mentioned as mechanisms that had helped address duplication.

The Management and Accountability System (MAS)

To improve the functioning of the RC system, and encourage teamwork among the members of the UNCT, in 2008 the UNDG developed a 'Management and Accountability System' (MAS), including a 'functional firewall'. The MAS has four key elements:
1. The job descriptions of UNCT members, as heads of entities, recognize the role of the RC
2. An input from the RC is required for the performance appraisal of UNCT members as heads of entities
3. Entities recognize an obligation to report to the RC on programme implementation
4. Entities recognize an obligation to report to the RC on resource mobilization activities

Over the years, the RC surveys have regularly sought to capture the field perspective on how the MAS is being implemented. RCs are asked about the proportion of entities with representatives in their country of assignment that are implementing each element of the MAS. The responses of RCs are shown in the tables below.

Table 28. Reporting to the RC on resource mobilization and programme implementation of UNDAF elements led by the entity, 2017

All UNCT members report regularly to the RC on:	Resource Mobilization		Programme Implementation	
	#	%	#	%
Strongly agree	5	5	12	11
Agree	26	24	73	67
Disagree	61	56	18	17
Strongly disagree	16	15	5	5
Total	108	100	108	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The extent of disagreement on whether UNCT member report regularly to the RC on resource mobilization is very striking. It is also consistent with the comments made in the context of competition among UN entities for non-core resources. As outlined in the comments provided by RCs, competition tends to encourage secrecy about sources of funding, at least until agreements have been signed, by which time it may be too late to ensure an efficient and effective division of labour among UN entities. The response on this question also echoes the concern of governments about lack of transparency on funding matters. There was less disagreement across DaO countries which suggests that DaO encourages more cooperative approaches to resource mobilization.

Under optional comments, while some RCs reported good progress in these areas, others commented on the difficulties they encountered in securing information from UNCT members, with comments that included: "*Information is not always completely accurate or received in a timely fashion*" and "*often resource mobilization is reported after it has happened.*"

The table below presents the responses on questions that address the two other key aspects of the Management and Accountability system (MAS) mentioned above.

Table 29. Extent of participation of UN entities in the management and accountability system at country level, as viewed by RCs, 2017

Participation by entities in the UNDG Management and Accountability System	The RC has contributed to the performance appraisal of UNCT members in the past 12 months (question 53)		The job descriptions of UNCT members, as heads of entities, recognize the role of the RC (question 54)	
	# of RCs	%	# of RCs	%
All entities	17	16	17	18
Most entities	18	17	19	20
Some entities	57	53	46	49
None	15	14	12	13
Total	107	100	94[7]	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The data shows clearly that compliance with the provisions of the MAS remains patchy. Comparing the responses in 2017 with those received in 2015 on the same questions, no significant change can be detected. For example, in 2017 33% of RC reported that they had contributed to the performance appraisal of all or most entity representatives, while in 2015 the corresponding figure was 30%.

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[7] 16 RCs skipped this question

An RC who checked 'all' explained: "*Through the annual Assessment of Results and Competencies (ARC), the RC assesses the performance of all UNCT members. The RC has contributed to the performance appraisal of one UNCT member through entities' separate corporate performance systems.*" Others also mentioned the ARC mechanism, and noted that this was separate from the entities' own performance appraisal systems. Many RCs commented on the limited compliance in their UNCTs, noting that many entities had not sought an input into their representative's performance appraisal. In a few cases, the explanation was that the RC is newly appointed.

Regarding job descriptions of UNCT members, nearly all of the 31 RCs who provided comments stressed that this information had not been shared with them. This may explain why 16 other RCs skipped question 54 altogether. However, without knowledge of the job description, it may be asked how an RC could be expected to provide an adequate appraisal of performance. To overcome such problems, one RC recommended that the sharing of job descriptions be done at headquarters level, and then passed on to the RC.

Performance assessments
RCs were asked about the extent to which they provide a formal input into the performance assessments of UNCT agency heads (see table below).

Table 30. Providing a formal input to the performance assessments of UNCT members

Please indicate the proportion of UNCT entity heads for whom you have provided a formal input into their performance assessments in your capacity as Resident Coordinator.	#	%
Greater than two-thirds	16	16
Between one-third and two-thirds	19	19
Less than one-third	65	65
Total	100	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The RCs who responded 'greater than two-thirds' are essentially those who responded 'all' in question 53, while 'between one-third and two-thirds' corresponds closely to 'most'. In this case, it may be seen that ten RCs skipped the question.

26 RCs provided optional comments, often stressing that the number was very few, or sometimes explaining that they were new in post. One RC indicated that four entities had been given inputs: UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNODC. Another RC pointed out that it may be one thing to give an appraisal, but "*the real question is what influence these inputs have on the overall performance appraisal process within the Agencies.*"

Empowerment of Resident Coordinators

As with question 47, it is the topics related to funding that provoke the most disagreement from the responses to question 48 asking whether RCs feel empowered to perform certain functions (see table x). The data shows a fairly high level of disagreement among RCs feeling empowered to be able to substantially increase common resource mobilization and to distribute common resources.

Table 31 – RC empowerment and functions in the UNCT

The RC is empowered to do the following:	To make final decisions on the strategic direction of the UNDAF		To substantially increase common resource mobilization		To distribute common resources	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Strongly agree	23	21	17	16	13	12
Agree	70	65	54	50	53	49
Disagree	14	13	34	31	35	32
Strongly disagree	1	1	3	3	7	7
Total	108	100	108	100	108	100

Source: 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

Challenges to common resource mobilization
Under optional comments, many RCs pointed out that common resources are very limited, and that nearly all resources are controlled by the entities. Also, given the current 'first among equals' status of the RC, the 'empowerment' was limited to what could be achieved through personal persuasion. It was noted that while there may be goodwill at the country level, UNCT members may come under conflicting pressures from their headquarters. A particularly insightful response (from a seasoned RC) was the following: "*The RC is seen by the Agencies only as a facilitator of processes that are imposed on the Agencies. The RC is not granted any real decision-making authority on substance or resources allocation. RC resource-mobilization efforts are seen as a threat by the Agencies, whether out of fear of competition or out of the (mistaken) belief that any RC resource-mobilization effort is intended to benefit UNDP first and foremost. With the disappearance of the coherence/MDG funds, there are no common resources to distribute beyond the RC's own budget, most of which are absorbed supporting UNCT processes.*"

Challenges to the RC receiving regular and useful information from UNCT members
The question asking RCs if they receive sufficiently regular and useful information from UNCT members to ensure effective communication with Governments regarding UN activities in the field is less specific than the two previous questions but covers essentially the same subject. Accordingly, the responses seem to reflect an average of the previous responses.

Figure 15 – RCs receives sufficiently regular and useful information from UNCT members

Question: The Resident Coordinator receives sufficiently regular and useful information from UNCT members to ensure effective communication with the Government regarding UNDS activities in the field?
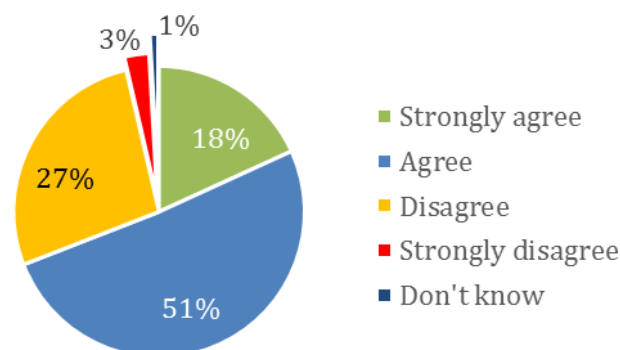
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

In optional comments, RCs mentioned the various fora such as UNCT meetings where information is shared, and some explained that they get information when the ask for it, but sometimes only after repeated follow-up, and also that responsiveness varies from entity to entity. Some mentioned that sharing of information is event-driven rather than regular. One RC explained that: "*Permanent and comprehensive exchange of information within the UNCT has been paramount to avoid duplication of efforts, maximize the use of existing human and financial resources.*"

One RC provided the following insightful comment: "*Coordination requires a strong role by the RC Office, which is under-staffed. The RC Office has two national officers to help the RC manage 16 agencies and over 500 staff, who are all busy implementing their own programmes. You cannot expect UN agencies to volunteer information, you need to have a strong system to request it and obtain it from agencies, but that means increasing the information collection capabilities of the RC office, and ultimately its capacity.*"

In response to the question on challenges encountered and suggestions on how to ensure that the UNCT regularly provides the RC with necessary updates, RCs pointed out that they do not have the authority to require entities to provide information, and that systems for providing information efficiently are lacking. Other challenges mentioned were competition for funding and inadequate capacity of the RC office. One RC summed up the challenges with these words: "*Very deep cultural issues, which varies according to the agency culture, but certainly overall there is too much fear that another agency will 'steal our ideas' or 'take all the credit' etc.*" Another RC mentioned that the UNCT had tried to address the issue of reluctance to share information with the Code of Conduct, but it had not made any difference. And another added: "*The corporate priorities for individual agencies remain to strengthen their individual programmes, and joint programming is a secondary priority.*"

Several RCs recommended that it be a requirement that entities share strategic information with them. In the words of one of the RCs: "*Heads of agencies should share main activities, inform about critical reports and analysis being carried out, share related analysis, invite RC to some major strategic planning exercises and share issues with government institutions in advance.*"

Many RCs responded that updates on the activities of UNCT members are received at monthly UNCT meetings, or at other regular coordination meetings. A few said 'weekly', while others said quarterly or less frequently or only on request. A few RCs mentioned that it varies by entity. One RC mentioned that the "*RCO hosts an inter-active website and encourages and facilitates inputs including shared calendar of events and regular blogs and articles on behalf of the UNCT.*" An intriguing response was: "*There is very active phone and email on updates by agencies. This is based on strong collegiality and requires a lot of diplomacy as agencies don't mind sharing information with the RC but do not want the RC to derail any of their initiatives.*"

Addressing bottlenecks
During the pilot stages of Delivering as One (DaO), the Chief Executives Board (CEB) identified a number of "bottlenecks" at headquarters level that were impeding the effective implementation of DaO. Since 2013, the CEB, through UNDG and HLCM, has been addressing these bottlenecks, and reported in 2016 that 30 out of 49 planned actions had been completed by the end of 2015. In 2016, the UNDG announced that it would adopt a follow-up Headquarters Plan of Action to help the UN development system meet the demands of the 2030 Agenda. One of the four 'key objectives' of the Plan is to "*ensure appropriate delegation of authority from headquarters to country-level representatives for taking decisions on programmatic and financial matters as agreed with national authorities.*"

In this context, RCs were asked whether the field representatives of UN entities enjoy sufficient delegated authority to respond effectively and efficiently to national needs and priorities.

Figure 16 – Delegation of authority from HQ to UNCT members

Question: The UN system field representatives in general enjoy sufficient delegated authority to respond effectively and efficiently to national needs and priorities?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
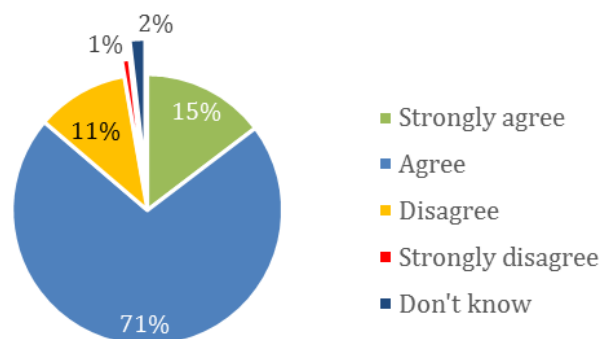
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

A sizeable majority of RCs agree that UNCT members in general enjoy sufficient delegated authority. However, many RCs added comments, explaining that there is great variation among entities, with funds and programmes tending to be decentralized and specialized agencies tending to remain centralized at headquarters or regional level. One RC commented that the entities appear to have authority to fulfil their individual mandate but not perhaps sufficient authority to promote a coherent UN-wide approach. RCs felt it was important to bring about more consistency, since they observed that activities are implemented more efficiently where authority is sufficiently delegated. One RC had observed a trend for some entities to become more centralized in terms of delegated authority rather than less.

Another RC (in a country facing humanitarian challenges) explained: "The system's effectiveness in response in the field is greatly diminished by burdensome planning and program processes. The most common excuse for not responding to new and urgent needs is a lack of funds/resources, and most often this is mostly about resources being pre-programmed so tightly the reps cannot re-program quickly."

Functional Firewall

For a number of years, UNDP has been progressively implementing the concept of a 'functional firewall', which is aimed at separating the RC functions from the UNDP RR functions, with particular reference to resource mobilization. The table below indicates the number of RCs who had delegated authority for resource mobilization, with a view to separating UNDP resource mobilization activities from the activities of the RC.

Table 32 – Second-ranking UNDP positions (after the RC)

UNDP positions immediately below that of Resident Representative	Number of countries with the position		
	2017	**2015**	**2014**
Country Director (CD)	45	48	27
Deputy Resident Representative (DRR)	52	71	49
Other second-ranking official	8	11	12
Total	105	130	88

Source: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Surveys of Resident Coordinators

The data show that in majority of countries (97 out of 105), there is a senior UNDP official to whom the RC can delegate authority. With regards to the 'other second-ranking official', several RCs qualified what this meant in the optional comment box, often mentioning that the next most senior official after the RC/RR was a national Assistant Resident Representative (in other words, UNDP has no Country Director or Deputy Resident Representative in the country.) The 8 offices with an 'other second-ranking official' immediately below the RC/RR are in countries with small UN/UNDP programmes, and no doubt there would be limits on the extent to which the firewall concept could be applied in such cases.

This is a preliminary question to the operative question below, and has been included in the RC surveys in 2014, 2015 and 2017. The total number of RCs who answered this question in 2017 was 110; in 2015 it was 115, and in 2014 it was 75; some countries with large or complex programmes may have a UNDP country director and a DRR and/or more than one of each position, which explains the totals of 130 and 88 under 2015 and 2014 as respondents could select more than one response.

The QCPR monitoring framework indicator 56b(i) includes the % of UNDP second-ranking officials who have signed delegation of authority letters, including for resource mobilization, with RC/RRs. As the figure below shows, the percentage now stands at 81%. A few RCs added optional comments. One indicated that the delegation of authority was being prepared, while another pointed out that s/he was the only international staff member in the UN/UNDP office, so there was no possibility of delegating responsibility.

Figure 17. Delegation of authority, 2014-2017
The RC has formally delegated authority for resource mobilization to the second-ranking UNDP official
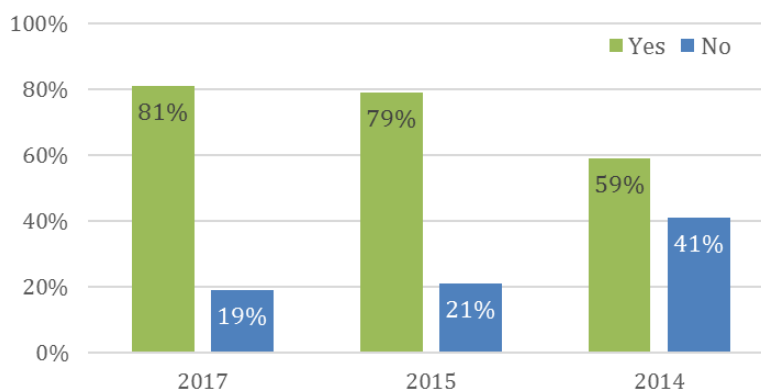
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The 2017 RC survey also enquired about delegation of authority from the RC to the next senior-most staff in respect of 'operational activities'. The responses are shown below:

Table 33. Delegation of authority for resource mobilization and for 'operational activities' from the RC to the second-ranking UNDP official

UNDP staff receiving delegation of authority	Authority delegated			
	For resource mobilization		For operational activities	
	#	%	#	%
Country Director (CD)	43	40	44	41
Deputy Resident Representative (DRR)	38	35	44	41
Other second-ranking official	6	6	9	8
No-one	21	19	11	10
Total	108	100	108	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

As may be seen, **all but eleven RCs out of the 108 RCs that answered this question reported delegated authority for 'operational activities' to the next senior-most official**. However, 'operational activities' is not well-defined, and the RCs' optional comments reveal that it was interpreted in various ways: for example, one RC mentioned that authority was delegated to all programme officers, while another RC wrote: "*before going abroad the RR signs a letter delegating authority to the DRR for UNDP operational activities*."

F. Reporting and measuring results

58. Did you provide the Government with a report on the results achieved by the UN development system in the last year?
59. If you responded that no report was submitted to the Government, please briefly explain why:
60. Regarding the report, to what extent do you agree with the following Statements: i) reports are sent to the Government regularly enough to meet their needs; ii) the information in the reports is up-to-date; iii) the results of the whole UN system are included; iv) reporting is structured around the outcomes of the UNDAF; v) reporting is linked to national development results?
61. Has the UN country team made their most recent annual results report publicly available?
62. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Regional UNDG Peer Support Group has provided the UNCT with the technical support needed in regard to the following key UNDAF steps: i) road map; ii) country analysis; iii) national vision 2030; iv) strategic planning; v) management arrangements; vi) results monitoring; vii) reporting and evaluation?
63. To what extent has the UN country team studied with the 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 (RBM) systems?
64. Has the Government expressed interest in receiving support from the UN country team in strengthening national RBM systems?
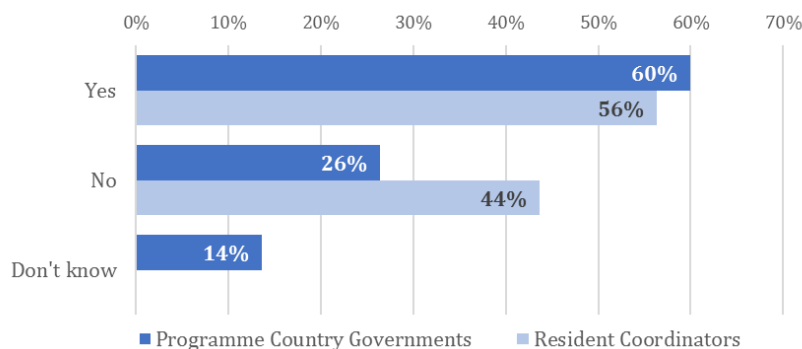
Key findings
- **Countries that have adopted DaO are much more likely to have received an annual UN results report in the past year**
- **There is room for improvement in the quality of the annual UN reports provided to governments, especially in terms of the frequency of reporting and inclusion of financial data**
- **Almost half of RCs stated the UN country team made their most recent annual results report publicly available.**
- **Most RCs appear to be largely satisfied with the support received from the Peer Support Group in regard to the 'UNDAF road map', but there appears to be a need for more support in other areas.**

A significant concern of governments, as reported in earlier DESA surveys is around the topic of transparency, and in particular around the reporting received from the UN system at country level. Up 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.

The new UNDAF guidelines, released in May 2017, state that one of the minimum requirements is development of an annual report, titled the One UN Country Results Report. In this regard, 56% of UNCTs reported in 2017 that they had provided a report to the government in the last year, as the chart below shows.

Figure 18. Provision of a report to the government in the last year: 2017 PCG and RC surveys

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

Countries that have adopted DaO are more likely to have received an annual results report in the past year. Among the Delivering as One countries, 69% of RCs reported providing a results report to the government in the last year, compared to 49% for non-DaO countries (see figure below). Considering that an annual results report is mandated in the SOPs there is significant scope for improvement. As the chart shows, the UNCT responses are confirmed by the governments.

Figure 19. Provision of a report to the government in the last year, disaggregated by DaO
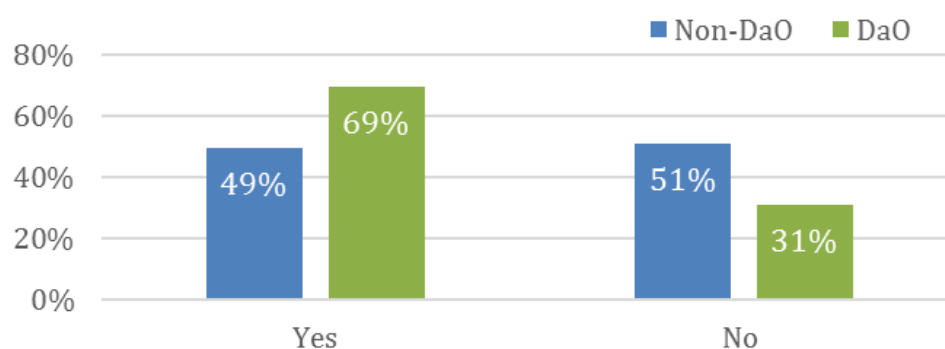
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The following were among the more common explanations provided by RCs as to why no report was submitted to the government in the past year:

- Report is under preparation
- Unofficial reports were provided
- Entities opted to provide individual reports
- Political transition or instability of government
- There is no UNDAF
- Lack of capacity on the UN side
- Government receives information through the results groups, which they co-chair

Several RCs indicated that with the establishment of results groups and annual joint work plans, they would be preparing such reports in the future.

The survey also examined the *quality* of reporting, and the results are summarised below.

Table 34. Quality dimensions of results reports provided to the government, 2017

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Quality dimensions	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Reports are sent to the government regularly enough to meet their needs	15	53	28	2	2	100
The information in the reports is up-to-date	21	61	14	2	2	100
The results of the whole UN system are included	20	50	24	3	3	100
Sufficient financial data is included	14	47	28	7	4	100
Reporting is structured around the outcomes of the UNDAF (or equivalent programme framework)	32	46	14	3	5	100
Reporting is linked to national development results	25	48	21	3	3	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

There appears to be significant room for improvement in the quality of the annual UN reports provided to governments. This is particularly the case as regards to frequency of reporting and inclusion of financial data.

In terms of the availability of these reports, among the 62 UNCTs that prepared a results report in the last year, 43 (or 70%) stated that it was publicly available. Some RCs explained that they had not received government clearance of the report in order to make it publicly available.

Regional UNDG support
Similar to 2015, a question exploring support provided to UNCTs from the Regional UNDG Peer Support Group on key aspects of the UNDAF process was asked in 2017.

Table 35. Regional UNDG support with key UNDAF steps, 2017

Sufficient support provided with these key UNDAF steps:	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %
Road Map	26	62	7	0	5
Country Analysis	15	57	22	1	5
National Vision 2030	5	36	44	2	13
Strategic Planning	21	52	18	1	8
Management Arrangements	13	47	30	1	9
Results Monitoring	12	50	28	2	8
Reporting and Evaluation	12	51	25	3	9

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The responses in 2017 indicate that most RCs appear to be largely satisfied with the support received from the Peer Support Group in regard to the 'road map', but there appears to be a need for more support in the other areas. Compared with the survey responses two years ago, it appears that the demand for support with country analysis has increased, given that the percentage that disagreed on this point has grown from 14% to 22%. The demand for stronger situation analysis could be attributable to the focus of the 2030 Agenda on reaching the most disadvantaged groups. The new UNDAF Guidelines (2017) indicate that the CCA should highlight UN support for the national achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and provide an opportunity to have wider national conversations on a 'national vision 2030'. In this context, the demand for more support with national vision 2030 is no doubt high as this is a new area where support is required from the Peer Support Groups.

Results-based management (RBM)

RCs were asked about the extent of UN-government collaboration on ensuring compatibility of results-based management systems. In the government survey, programme countries that indicated that they have a national results-based management system, were also asked the same question. The table below shows the results.

Table 36 – Extent of Government-UN collaboration on compatibility of RBM systems, 2017

Extent of collaboration on compatibility of RBM systems	All RCs %	Governments[8] %
To a large extent	23	24
To a moderate extent	42	51
To a small extent	24	20
Not at all	11	5
Total	100	100

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[8] Based on data from 65 governments that stated they have a national RBM system.

Caution is needed when comparing the results from RCs and governments. Given that all RCs responded to this question, it includes data from RCs in countries that stated they did not have a national RBM system. Thus, it is to be expected that the percentages in the RC column indicating 'to small extent' or 'not at all' are overstated. However, some RCs explained how the collaboration had been managed, mentioning that UNDAF preparation or evaluation exercises or SDG monitoring initiatives had been used.

Both governments and RCs were asked about UN support in strengthening national RBM systems. RCs were asked if the government had expressed interest in receiving support from the UNCT in strengthening national RBM systems. The responses are shown below.

Table 37 – RC perspective: support requested to strengthen national RBM systems, 2017

Did Government express interest in receiving support from the UN system in strengthening national RBM systems	RCs in 2017 %
Yes, and the UN system has been able to respond positively	57
Yes, but the UN system has not been able to respond positively	7
No	36
Total	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Governments that do have RBM systems were asked if they had requested support from the UNCT to strengthen those systems. The responses are shown below.

Table 38 – Government perspective: support requested to strengthen national RBM systems, 2017

Did Government request support from the UNCT to strengthen national RBM systems	Governments in 2017 %
Yes, and support was received from the UN system	46
Yes, however support has not yet been received from the UN system	16
No	15
Don't know	22
Total	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments

The responses tabulated above show consistency as far as the proportion of RCs saying they received no request (36%) is similar to the proportion of governments saying 'no' or 'don't know' (37% altogether). Excluding these answers, 89% of UNCTs indicated that they responded positively compared to 74% of Governments indicating that support was received from the UN. On the other hand, there are a number of countries where the Government feels it has not received an adequate response from the UN.

Many RCs elaborated on the UN system's responses, several of them noting that the responses to date have been provided by entities individually. Other RCs mentioned collective responses, such as a joint programme on supporting the national statistical system. Several referred to actions that were underway in connection with SDG implementation. Some RCs who said 'Yes, but the UN system has not been able to respond positively' added that there were plans to do so in the future. Overall, there

seems to be scope for UNCTs to give more collective support to RBM-related initiatives, in addition to or in place of responses by individual entities.

G. Strengthening complementarity among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts

65. Please indicate which areas of activity apply in your location: i) Development; ii) Disaster risk reduction; iii) Humanitarian action;; iv) Sustaining peace?

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

67. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the UN country team members provide the RC with sufficient and timely information to ensure strong coherence of development and humanitarian activities

68. With reference to the Bretton Woods institutions in particular, please indicate whether any of the following types of cooperation have taken place in the last two years: i) agreements; ii) joint assessments and/or analysis; iii) joint strategies; iv) joint plans; v) joint funding mechanisms?

69-71. Are there national mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding efforts that are supported by the UNCT? Is the mechanism institutionalized? Is it a country-led mechanism?

72. Please indicate to what extent are UN humanitarian and development activities both based on the following: i) collective and/or complementary results; ii) joint analysis; iii) joint planning; iv) joint coordination mechanisms?

73. Please indicate to what extent are UN peacebuilding and development activities both based on the following: i) collective and/or complementary results; ii) joint analysis; iii) joint planning; iv) joint coordination mechanisms?

74. Which of the following does the UNDAF substantively address: i) disaster and climate risk reduction; ii) the drivers of needs, risks and vulnerability; iii) peacebuilding/sustaining peace action?

75. If applicable, in the past two years, have UN development actors and UN humanitarian actors engaged in the following: i) joint needs assessments; ii) joint planning; iii) joint monitoring and evaluation on progress and collective outcomes?

76. Is there an active UN peacekeeping mission in your country managed by DPKO?

77. Is there an active UN political mission in your country managed by DPA?

78. The QCPR calls on UN mission actors and UNCTs to enhance coordination and to work more collaboratively. In this regard please indicate the extent that the mission and UN entities coordinate in the following ways: i) a shared / common vision between the mission and the UNCt; ii) integrated planning mechanisms in UN headquarters and the field to carry out integrated strategic, programmatic or technical assessments; iii) agreed results, timeliness, respective responsibilities and priorities for the missions and UNCTs; iv) agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation /reporting?

79. Does your UNCT have a joint plan for draw down and/or withdrawal of the UN mission?

Key findings
- **81% of RCs agreed that the UNCT provided the RC with sufficient and timely information to ensure strong coherence of development and humanitarian activities, although some strongly disagreed**

- **Cooperation among humanitarian and development actors was highest in terms of contributing to collective or complementary results but there was less cooperation in the areas of joint planning and joint coordination mechanisms.**
- **Many RCs reported that their relationships with Bretton Woods institutions remain ad-hoc;**
- **A large proportion of RCs (84%) reported that there was an institutionalized mechanism to coordinate development and peacebuilding activities in country**
- **Integration of disaster risk reduction into planning frameworks is taking place. 89% of UNDAFs substantively address disaster and climate risk reduction. The same high proportion of RCs reported that the UNDAF substantively addresses the drivers of needs, risks, and vulnerability**

The first questions in this section explored the perceptions of RCs on how closely UN entities collaborate across sectors. Overall, **25% of RCs indicated "very close collaboration" between UN entities across sectors, 51% reported "close collaboration," while 23% reported "some collaboration"** (see table below). In comparison, only 18% of Governments perceived "very close collaboration" between UN entities, while two-thirds (67%) perceived there to be "close collaboration".

One RC operating in a country that has experienced political turmoil in the last two years indicated that there was little coordination between the UNDAF and the Humanitarian Response Plan. Another RC working in a country with significant humanitarian needs commented that while there was collaboration among UN humanitarian entities, there seemed to be a lack of coordination across other sectors. On the other hand, an RC from a high-income country reported that there was little coordination among humanitarian actors in country.

Table 39. Collaboration among UN entities

Among the areas selected in the previous question, please assess the level of collaboration among the UN agencies engaged in more than one area:	2017 %
Very close collaboration	25
Close collaboration	51
Some collaboration	23
No collaboration at all	0
Not applicable as only selected one area in previous question	1

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

 Most RCs (81%) agreed that the UNCT provided the RC with sufficient and timely information to ensure strong coherence of development and humanitarian activities, including 20% that "strongly agreed" with this statement. Meanwhile, 19% of RCs disagreed that the UN country team provided such timely information, which included 9% that "strongly disagreed".

Table 40. Provision of information to the RC to ensure coherence

| The UN country team members provide the RC with sufficient and timely information to ensure strong coherence of development and humanitarian activities	2017 %
Strongly agree	20
Agree	61
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	9
Not applicable as there isn't any humanitarian activities	0

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

In optional comments, some RCs pointed out that information sharing by the UNCT remains ad hoc and on a limited set of activities. One RC commented that monthly updates by the UN country team was not sufficient for short notice updates that are needed to communicate with the government on emerging issues. Several RCs reported that while they receive sufficient updates on activities of UN humanitarian actors, they do not receive such information from UN development actors.

The figure below shows that **very few UNCTs have any formal agreements (including joint plans, agreements, strategies or funding mechanisms) with the Bretton Woods institutions** (the World Bank or the IMF). While 54% of RCs reported that the World Bank (or another Bretton Woods institution) carries out joint assessment or analyses with the UN country team, only 11% of RCs reported that the World Bank and UNCT have joint funding mechanisms.

Figure 20. Cooperation with Bretton Woods institutions

Question: With reference to the Bretton Woods institutions in particular, please indicate whether any of the following types of cooperation have taken place in the last two years:
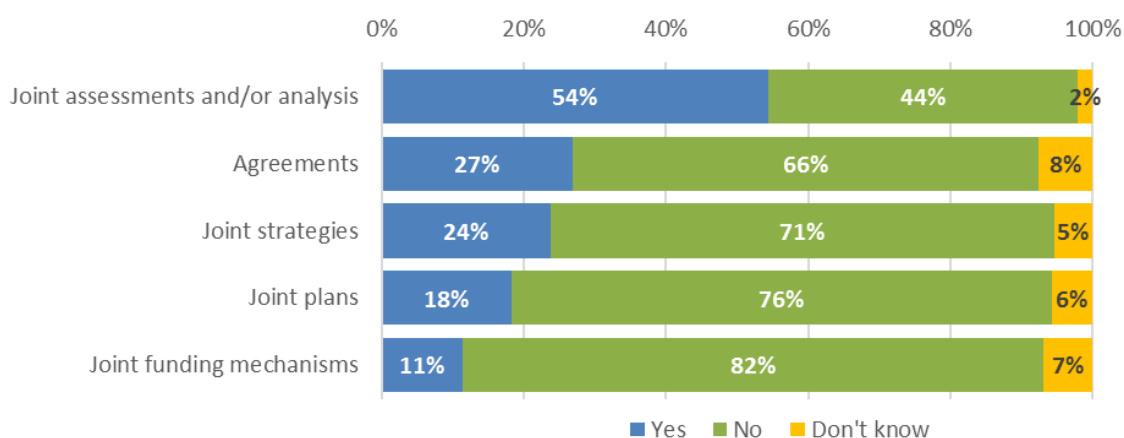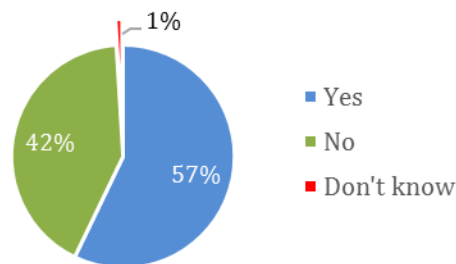

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Overall, many RCs reported that their relationships with Bretton Woods institutions remain ad-hoc and expressed interest in strengthening cooperation with the World Bank and the IMF. One RC noted that they worked closely with the World Bank during the drafting of a poverty reduction strategy for the country. Another RC noted that while the World Bank signed the UNDAF, they did not participate in a UN country team joint implementation approach. Several RCs noted that the World Bank or IMF sometimes participate in UNCT meetings or conducts in-country assessments. In this regard, several RCs commented that they benefited from the exchange of information with the World Bank. Nevertheless, several RCs said they wished to step up World Bank and IMF programs in country, especially to implement the SDGs.

More than half, or 57% of RCs reported that there were national mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding efforts. Several RCs noted that national ministries made efforts to coordinate UN activities in these two areas. In a post-conflict country, one RC noted that there was no national or international-led mechanism to coordinate development and peacebuilding efforts in country despite the need for one. Another RC noted that while the UN engaged in activities to strengthen national governance and development, there were no formal peacebuilding activities.

Figure 21. National mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding efforts

Question: Are there national mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding efforts that are supported by the UNCT?
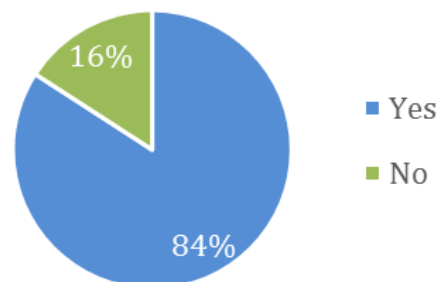

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

A large proportion of RCs (84%) reported that there was an institutionalized mechanism to coordinate development and peacebuilding activities in country while only 16% reported that the mechanism was ad-hoc. RCs noted that government ministries, such as ministries for peace and reconciliation or ministries of foreign affairs coordinated UN activities for development and peacebuilding. Some RCs commented that the country did not have a peacebuilding commission, but was in need of one. Another RC commented that while there was a national peacebuilding commission, UN partners did not work with the commission due to political turmoil in country.

Figure 22. Mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding activities in the country

Question: Is the mechanism institutionalized?

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Likewise a high number of RCs (81%) reported that the mechanism to coordinate development and peacebuilding activities is country-led. One RC working in a country with a large humanitarian crisis noted that the UN was leading this mechanism as a pilot.

Figure 23. Country-led national mechanisms to coordinate development and peacebuilding activities

Question: Is it a country-led mechanism?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
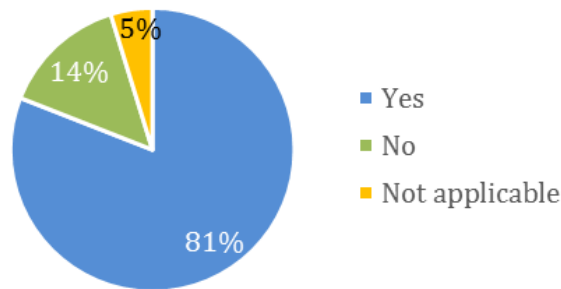
RC's perception of the UNCTs level of cooperation between humanitarian and development actors is shown in the table below. Cooperation was highest in terms of contributing to collective or complementary results. There was slightly less cooperation between humanitarian and development actors in the areas of joint planning and joint coordination mechanisms. One RC commented that while drafting a new UNDAF, they closely considered the priorities of the Humanitarian Response Plan. The challenge, as reported, was that no joint coordination mechanisms had been developed between UN actors operating under the different planning instruments. Another RC commented that the funding mechanisms for humanitarian and development activities were different, which did not facilitate integration between the two areas. Similarly, a third RC commented that donors were heavily focused on humanitarian action in the country, so there was less incentive to ensure coordination with development action.

Table 41. Humanitarian and development activities

Please indicate to what extent are UN humanitarian and development activities both based on:	To a large extent %	To a moderate extent %	To a small extent %	Not at all %
Collective and/or complementary results	51	36	10	3
Joint analysis	48	40	10	2
Joint planning	45	36	16	3
Joint coordination mechanisms	40	37	10	3

Similarly, the UNCTs level of cooperation between humanitarian and development actors was asked about and the results are shown the table below. The data suggests that UN development actors collaborate less with peacebuilding actors than with humanitarian actors. For example, a surprising 29% of RCs noted that UN peacebuilding and development activities are "not at all" based on collective and/or complementary results. This may however point to an overall lack of UN activities for peacebuilding. One RC with a large-scale humanitarian crisis pointed out that the UN does not formally have activities labelled under "peacebuilding," but that development activities do in fact contribute to fostering peace within the country.

Table 42. Peacebuilding and development activities

Please indicate to what extent are UN peacebuilding and development activities both based on:	To a large extent %	To a moderate extent %	To a small extent %	Not at all %
Collective and/or complementary results	26	32	13	29
Joint analysis	34	24	16	26
Joint planning	29	29	13	28
Joint coordination mechanisms	32	28	11	29

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Integration of disaster risk reduction into planning frameworks is taking place. 89% of UNDAFs substantively address disaster and climate risk reduction. The same high proportion of RCs reported that the UNDAF substantively addresses the drivers of needs, risks, and vulnerability. Also, among the RCs in countries where it is applicable, 77% reported that the UNDAF substantively addresses issues of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. One RC noted that the UNDAF will be revised after the annual review to incorporate activities for sustaining peace. Another RC noted that the previous UNDAF (2013-2017) did not address these issues, but that that the new UNDAF would incorporate these priorities. It also noted that the while the UNDAF did not specifically address activities under the rubric of "peacebuilding," some development activities in the UNDAF would contribute to this goal (such as implementation of SDG16).

Table 43. Disaster risk reduction, drivers of needs and peacebuilding

Does the UNDAF substantially address:	Yes %	No %	Not applicable %
Disaster and climate risk reduction	89	7	4
The drivers of needs, risks and vulnerability	89	6	5
Peacebuilding/sustaining peace action	48	14	38

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

A high majority, or 87% of RCs responded that, in the last two years, UN development and humanitarian actors conducted joint needs assessments, 82% engaged in joint planning, and 70% conducted joint monitoring and evaluation on progress on collective outcomes (see table below).

Table 44. UN development actors and UN humanitarian actors

If applicable, in the past two years, have UN development actors and UN humanitarian actors engaged in:	Yes %	No %	Don't know %
Joint needs assessments	87	13	0
Joint planning	82	17	1
Joint monitoring and evaluation on progress on collective outcomes	70	28	1

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

Nearly half of RCs (48%) said that UN mission actors and UN country teams share a common vision "to a large extent." In contrast, only 13% of the RCs said that UN mission actors and UN country teams coordinate through agreed mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

One RC with a large humanitarian crisis noted that despite a large UNCT, various envoys and inter-entity taskforces, there were no joint assessments or integrated planning to coordinate UN action in the country. In terms of measures to enhance coordination between UN mission actors and UNCTs, one RC commented that the use of an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) had helped contribute to greater coherence across the UN's political engagement, development, and humanitarian response. Another RC noted that they were currently in the process of developing an ISF.

Only two RCs said that the UNCT had a joint plan for drawdown of the political or peacekeeping mission. The other 23 RCs who responded (92%) said there was no joint plan for drawdown of the mission. Other RCs noted that they were still in the process of discussing an exit strategy with the government or were still working on developing a joint drawdown plan between the UN mission and the UN country team.

H. Regional Dimension

80. To what extent do you agree or disagree that regional UNDG teams (R-UNDG) provide effective support on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to the country?
81. To what extent do you agree or disagree that regional coordination mechanisms (RCM) provide effective support on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to the country.
82. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Regional Commissions provide effective support on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to the country.
83. In the last year, to what extent has the UNCT benefitted from the following kinds of work of the relevant Regional Commission: i) normative and policy support work; ii) technical expertise; iii) platforms for policy discussion and exchange of experience; iv) regional SDGs follow-up and review activities?

Key findings:
- **Roughly half the Governments report that the Regional Economic Commissions contribute to the countries' most pressing regional issues.**
- **Feedback received on the effectiveness of Regional Economic Commissions on regional and sub-regional issues of relevance to the country is generally on the less positive side**

RCs were asked whether regional UNDG (R-UNDG) teams provide effective support on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to their country. The results are shown in Table 45.

Table 45. Contribution of Regional Coordination Mechanisms and Regional UNDGs to regional/sub-regional issues

Made effective contribution on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to the country:	Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM)		Regional UNDG (R-UNDG)	
	2015 (%)	2017 (%)	2015 (%)	2017 (%)
Strongly agree	19	8	16	8
Agree[9]	54	41	63	68
Disagree	18	26	17	16
Strongly disagree	4	6	2	4
Don't know	5	19	2	4
	100	100	100	100

Source: 2017 DESA Survey of Resident Coordinators

The data shows that R-UNDGs received more favourable responses than RCMs. This may be due to the significantly more operational nature of R-UNDGs. Notwithstanding, the 2017 survey found that favourability has dropped for both the RCMs and the R-UNDGs since 2015.

Support provided by Regional Commissions
About half the RCs 'agreed' that their relevant Regional Commission provides effective support on the regional or sub-regional issues of greatest relevance to their country. A considerable number (17%) responded 'don't know', which suggests that the contribution was limited.

RCs were also asked about their interactions with Regional Commissions in four particular areas: normative and policy support; technical expertise; platforms for policy discussion and exchange of experience; and, regional SDGs follow-up and review activities. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 24 – Regional commissions' areas of work and UNCT benefits (RC – 83)

Question: In the last year, to what extent has the UNCT benefitted from the following kinds of work of the relevant Regional Commission:
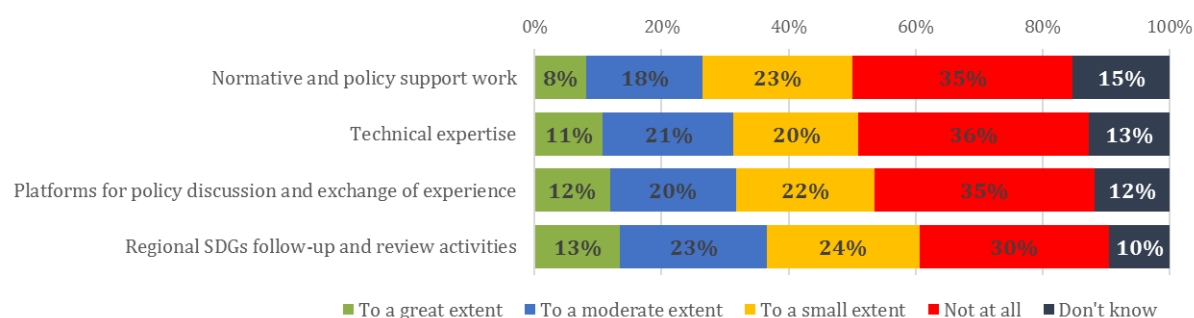
Source: DESA 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The data shows that slightly more UNCTs saw benefits in the area of SDG follow-up and review than in the other areas, but here too, less than half of RCs noted significant benefits from the Regional

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[9] 2015 survey answer choice was 'somewhat agree', and likewise 'disagree' was 'somewhat disagree'

Commission. However, the majority of RCs indicate that the benefits from the support provided by the RECs to country-level work in the four specific areas is limited.

IV.   EFFICIENCY

A. Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers

Note: Two preambular questions regarding HACT are questions 87 and 88 below.

> **84. Does your UNCT have a Common Assurance Plan (i.e. periodic on-site reviews, programmatic monitoring, scheduled and special audits) in place?**
> **85. Which entities use the Common Assurance Plan?**
> **86. Please explain what has been preventing your UNCT from establishing a Common Assurance Plan**
> **87. Do any members of your UNCT use a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)?**
> **88. Which entities participate in HACT implementation in your country?**

> **Key findings**
> - **HACT is being applied by only a few entities, notably UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF.**

Based on results of the survey, 37% of UNCTs have a Common Assurance Plan. Many RCs commented that HACT was being applied by only a few entities, notably UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF. Some mentioned that a Common Assurance Plan was under preparation, or planned for the next UNDAF. Other RCs explained that there was little of no overlap of implementing partners, so the need for a joint approach was limited. Some RCs indicated that reviews and spot checks are done with individual implementing partners by the concerned entity. One RC noted that the assurance plan covered the micro assessment and audit for joint implementing partners.

RCs provided several explanations as to the challenges to established a Common Assurance Plan, including:
- coordination was difficult;
- entities had different policies;
- the UNCT did not consider it a priority;
- there were few or no joint implementing partners;
- lack of a common platform for sharing data;
- lack of knowledge about what the plan involves and what the benefits are;
- lack of interest;
- no clear guidance from headquarters; and.
- political sensitivity around implementation of micro-assessments.

Also, in countries where entities mostly use direct implementation, establishing a Common Assurance Plan may not be applicable since there may be no cash transfers to national institutions.

One RC offered this considered response: "*Common assurance plans have been perceived as best practices, but is not mandatory as per the HACT framework guideline. A common plan is inhibited by the fact that each agency has its own criteria to determine assurance activity including financial thresholds and risk levels.*" Another RC explained: "*Assurance activities especially audits are planned*

at UN agency headquarters level with very little participation at the country-level where coordination is happening."

One RC mentioned that establishing a Common Assurance Plan had been difficult, but the UNCT had been able to overcome the obstacles. Several RCs mentioned that the UNCT intended to prepare a Common Assurance Plan, in conjunction with a new UNDAF or similar exercise.

B. Common Budgetary Frameworks (CBF)

89. Does a Common Budgetary Framework (CBF) exist covering the current UNDAF (or equivalent instrument) programming period in your country? **90. Please provide further details why a CBF covering the current UNDAF programming period has not been fully implemented:** **91. If you have a CBF, is it at all times accessible for the government, development cooperation partners (donors) and other stakeholders?** **92. Do you receive information on available and projected financial contributions from agency representatives, when requested?** **93. In the context of making the CBF a useful and effective instrument, please indicate the proportion of entities that provide financial data on time:** **94. To what extent is the financial data received from agency representatives structured around the UNDAF outcomes:**

Key findings • **59% of UNCTs currently have a medium-term CBF while 30% of have an annual CBF.** • **Entities need to provide financial information in a more timely manner if the CBF is to become a more useful and effective instrument.**

A current and publicly accessible CBF also serves to enhance transparency by providing programme country governments, development cooperation partners (donors) and other stakeholders with a simplified single reference document that covers the UN funding situation at any point in time during the programming cycle.

As of mid-2017, 59% of UNCTs now use a medium-term CBF, and the CBF is updated annually in approximately half of those countries. Related to this, 13% of UNCTs have adopted a Joint Resource Mobilization strategy that is monitored and reported against the One UN Country Results Report.

This question has been included in the RC survey since 2014. The data from each survey is presented in the table below, broken down according to whether or not the response came from a DaO country.

Table 46 - Prevalence of Common Budgetary Frameworks (CBF), 2014-2017

Common Budgetary Framework (CBF) exists:	2017				2015				2014			
	Responses from DaO countries		Responses from all other countries		Responses from DaO countries		Responses from all other countries		Responses from DaO countries		Responses from all other countries	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes[10]	30	77	37	52	27	63	12	17	13	54	3	6
No	9	23	34	48	16	37	60	83	11	46	48	94
Total	39	100	71	100	43	100	72	100	24	100	51	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The responses to this question tie in with the figure on the Standard Operating Procedures (Fig xx) as regards countries where the UNCT has developed a medium-term CBF.

The data reveals that CBFs are now being prepared by the majority of UNCTs, a substantial growth over the last two years. While CBFs remain more prevalent in DaO countries, the non-DaO countries are catching up. At the same time, there is some way to go to meet the expectations expressed in the 2012 QCPR and address the widespread concerns about lack of transparency on funding matters.

Reasons for not developing a CBF
RCs in countries that do not yet have a CBF were asked to provide a reason. Some pointed to resistance by some entities, echoing comments made in 2015, and stating that the UNCT did not consider it to be a requirement. Some RCs explained that some elements of a CBF had been put in place, but there was no full-fledged CBF. Many RCs mentioned plans to develop a CBF in conjunction with a new UNDAF or equivalent.

The disaggregated data by region, shows that in most regions a majority of UNCTs have established a CBF, the exceptions being Asia and the Pacific where only 41% of UNCTs have a CBF, and Arab States where the share is exactly 50%. This reflects considerable progress over the last two years, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Central Asia.

Figure 25. Countries with a CBF - by region, 2017

Question: Does a Common Budgetary Framework (CBF) exist covering the current UNDAF (or equivalent instrument) programming period in your country?

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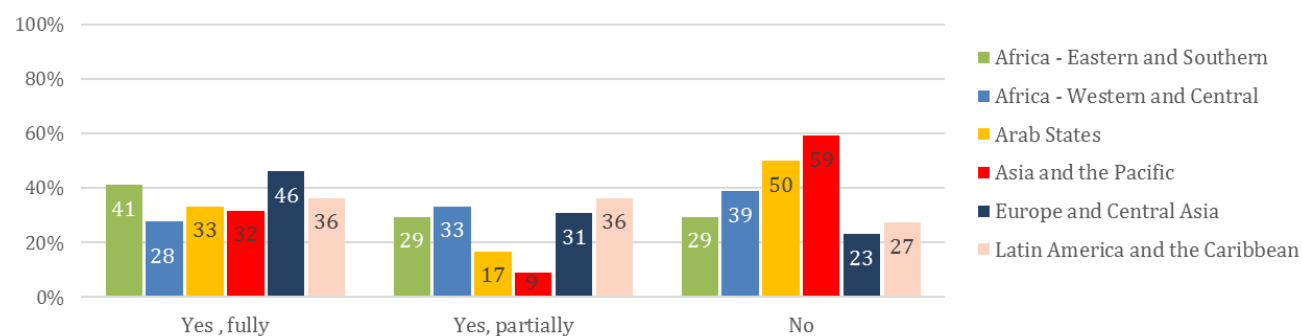
[10] While in 2014 and 2015 this was a simple Yes/No question, in 2017 there were two Yes options: Fully or Partially. They are grouped together as Yes for the purpose of this table.

Table 47. Accessibility of CBF to key partners, 2015 and 2017

CBF is accessible to key partners:	2017		2015	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	33	80	28	72
No	8	20	9	23
Not applicable	-	-	2	5
Total	41	100	39	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

This table suggests that there has also been a small amount of progress in terms of sharing financial data with partners. A few RCs commented that it had been shared so far only with government and donors, or only with the government. Others mentioned plans to do so in future.

To maintain a CBF, the RC needs to receive relevant data from UNCT members on a regular basis. Accordingly, the following question was asked of RCs.

Table 48. Receipt of financial information from agencies, 2015 and 2017

Information on financial contributions received when requested:	2017		2015	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	41	98	37	95
No	1	2	2	5
Total	42	100	39	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

The table indicates that, in countries where the UNCT has established a CBF, almost all RCs receive financial data when requested. In their comments, some RCs noted the difficulty they had encountered in obtaining data from some agencies, while some expressed reservations about the accuracy or completeness of the data. RCs also commented that the process was time-consuming as agencies tended not to be pro-active in providing information. One RC felt that action was required at headquarters level to harmonize the way financial data is presented, and that this would make the UNCT's task much easier.

In 2015, RCs were asked to assess the timeliness and quality of the data received from agencies. For 2017, the data was sought separately in regard to timeliness and whether the data was structured around UNDAF outcomes. Again, this refers only to countries with a CBF.

Table 49 – Timeliness of CBF data provided by entities

Timeliness of data received from agencies	#	%
All entities provide information on time	8	20
Most entities provide information on time	17	43
Some entities provide information on time	14	35
No entities provide information on time	1	2
Total	40	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

As noted already under several other questions, **there is much scope for improvement in respect of the timeliness with which agencies provide information.** RCs were invited to use the comment

box to mention briefly any good practices or challenges related. While some reiterated the comments mentioned under question 91 above, one RC mentioned an online tool as a good practice, although noted that it needed to be more user-friendly.

Table 50 – Structuring CBF data around UNDAF outcomes

Extent to which data received from agencies is structured around UNDAF outcomes:	#	%
Always structured around UNDAF outcomes	17	43
Usually structured around UNDAF outcomes	16	40
Sometimes structured around UNDAF outcomes	6	15
Rarely structured around UNDAF outcomes	1	2
Total	40	100

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators

There is much scope for improvement in terms of ensuring that data is structured around UNDAF outcomes. A few RCs again alluded to the challenges in obtaining information, while one RC contributed the following 'good practices': "*1. The UNDAF captures the entire UN's priority activities - development, humanitarian, and peace. 2. Joint oversight and reporting to the steering committee reduces transaction cost.*"

## C. Flexible, cost-effective and collaborative field presence

> **95. To what extent do you agree or disagree that UN presence is adequately tailored for meeting the specific challenges of the country**
> **96. To what extent do you agree or disagree that UN presence: i) is flexible; ii) is cost-effective; iii) operates collaboratively?**
> **97. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a clear division of labour (that is, no duplication or overlaps) among UN entities at the country level:**

> <u>**Key findings**</u>
> - **There is room for improvement in most countries to ensure that UN presence is adequately tailored to meet the specific challenges of the country**
> - **The extent of disagreement by both RCs and governments on the division of labour at country level is an indication that significant challenges exist.**

Both RCs and Governments were asked if UN presence is adequately tailored for meeting the specific challenges of the country, and the results are shown in the figure below. **The data suggests that there is room for improvement in most countries, and much room for improvement in some countries.**

Figure 26 – UN presence is "adequately tailored" for meeting the specific challenges of the country
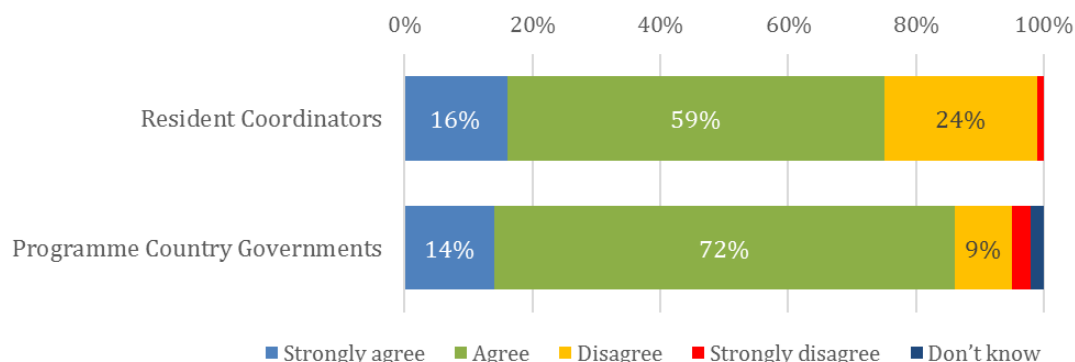
Source: *2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments*

Gaps and challenges to ensuring UN presence is adequately tailored
RCs' optional comments provided many insights in response to this question. Some RCs judged that the UN presence was appropriate in the context of the 2030 Agenda, but others saw gaps in various areas: economic analysis capabilities were reported to be lacking in a middle-income country, capacity for SDG implementation and integrated development in a large middle-income country, human rights expertise in a country with a grave human rights crisis. OHCHR and UNODC were among the entities that RCs wished were present in their country.

Another RC in an upper middle-income country called for the UN to adapt to such contexts, with a structure "*based in results-based management, flexible and oriented to upstream policy advice*." A few RCs viewed the country presence of some entities as being driven by entity mandates or donor interests rather than the priorities of the country. In this regard, one RC suggested that the concept of universal presence "for other (e.g. political) reasons" should be delinked from development considerations.

In comparing RC and government responses, the overall pattern is similar although fewer governments selected 'disagree'; however, this could be more a matter of client acquiescence in responding to the survey than to any real differences in views.

Challenges to ensuring UN presence is flexible, cost-effective, and collaborative
Some RCs explained that lack of cost-effectiveness was related to the cost of maintaining separate entity representations, and to insufficient progress with a business operations strategy. Some saw flexibility being limited because entity presence was dictated by headquarters considerations rather than country needs. One RC noted that "*The UN presence appears to reflect historical evolution dictated by budget pressures rather than a considered assessment of the country's present need, and the mechanisms to adapt this presence, in a coordinated manner, to evolving needs do not appear to exist.*"

On collaboration, while most RCs reported that collaboration was satisfactory, they saw room for improvement. One RC explained: "*Agencies operate collaboratively, but under the constraint that they are obliged to raise funds individually to sustain their programmes and office presences*" and another pointed out that "*UN agencies collaborate effectively, however greater emphasis on common and joint*

working approaches from most agencies is required to strengthen UN presence and effectiveness in the country."

RCs (as well as Governments) were asked if UN presence is flexible, cost-effective and allows for collaborative operations. The responses are shown below. The responses on cost-effectiveness suggest that this is the area in the greatest need of improvement, although there is scope for improvement in all three areas questioned.

Figure 27. Characteristics of UN presence
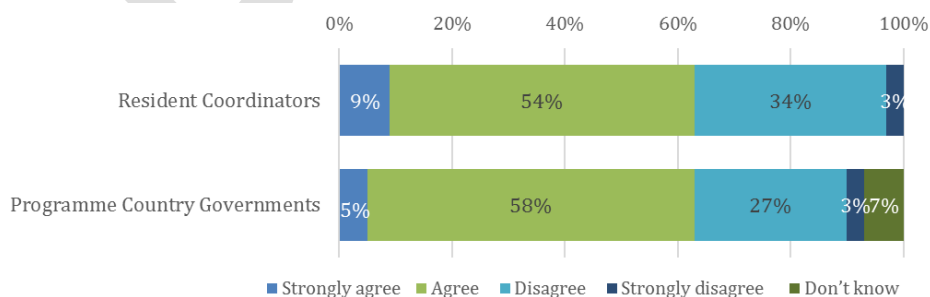
Question: The UN presence is:
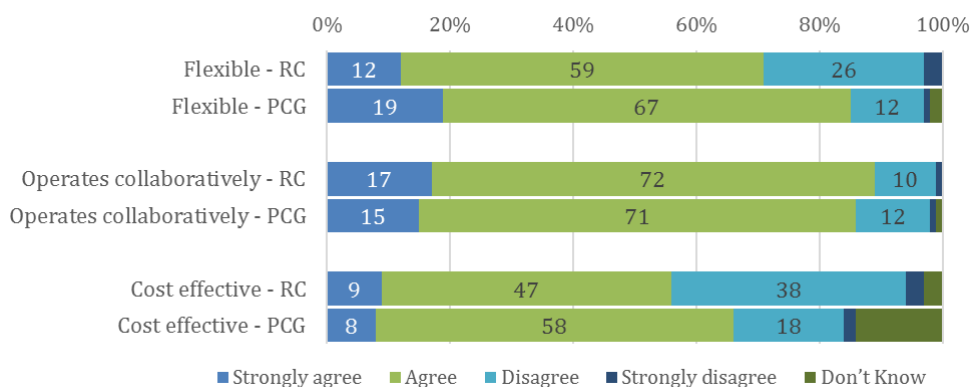
Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (PCG)

In their optional comments, governments echoed some of the RCs' comments, such as UNCT flexibility being constrained by requirements from some entity headquarters, 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.

The extent of disagreement by both RCs and governments on the division of labour at country level is an indication that significant challenges exist (see figure below). Also, as seen in previous surveys, RCs tend to disagree somewhat more than governments, most likely because they are more aware of and affected by issues of duplication and competition than that of governments.

Figure 28. Clear division of labour (versus overlaps) among UN entities, RC and PCG surveys in 2017

Source: 2017 Survey of Resident Coordinators (RC) and 2017 Survey of Programme Country Governments (PCG)
 Improvements and challenges on the division of labour

In their optional comments, several RCs noted that improvements had been made toward a clearer division of labour but challenges remained. For example, improvements had been made through results groups working effectively. RCs and governments made similar comments, including on the areas where overlaps or competition was particularly noticed, such as gender, health and youth. A typical RC comment was: "*There is some duplication and overlap between entities but we try to resolve this through coordination. Part of the problem is that agencies are competing for funding, and donor funding to an extent drives competition between agencies. Agency HQs and Regional Staff also to some extent encourage agencies to compete for funding.*"

V.   ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FROM RCs

> 98. Drawing on your experience as RC, please briefly outline any potential opportunities where synergies could be leveraged to improve the efficiency of resources (i.e. human, financial, physical resources)
> 99. In the same context, please briefly describe the main challenges that the UNCT currently faces (or perhaps will likely need to address in the future) in aligning UN presence to meet the specific needs of the country
> 100. Please briefly describe any best practices and/or innovations to adapt the UNDS to the new requirements of the 2030 Agenda and or/and any improvements to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system.
> 101. Finally, please provide any additional comments you may wish to make on any aspect of implementing the QCPR resolution at country level.

> **Key findings**
> - **In regard to cost-effectiveness, many RCs suggested reviewing the number of UN representative offices, minimizing the number and scope of individual back offices, and coordinating decisions on office space to maximize co-location.**

The final part of the RC survey included a couple of broad strategic open-ended questions. 94 RCs provided comments on question 98, and many RCs made more than one proposal for potential opportunities where synergies could be levered to improve the efficiency of resources. Some referred to the SG's initiative on repositioning the UNDS and looked forward to its implementation. **There were numerous calls from RCs for joint programming, or making it the 'default mode', and for establishing thematic funds requiring the participation of more than one entity to encourage dialogue and complementarity.** Also, often mentioned was joint resource mobilization strategies and practices, and more joint work planning.

Many RCs suggested reviewing the number of UN representative offices, minimizing the number and scope of individual back offices, and coordinating decisions on office space to maximize co-location and cost-effectiveness. Common UN premises and UN House were frequently mentioned, while some noted that a UN house does not guarantee consolidation of back-office functions. It was also suggested that staff of agencies with a very small presence could be integrated into the management structures of larger organizations to ensure efficiency and maximization of UN resources in the country. Non-resident agencies or those with a very small presence could be encouraged to work with the RC before embarking on new activities to see whether existing agencies cannot operationally undertake the activity, drawing on any entity-specific technical expertise that may be necessary. Along these lines, it was noted that OHCHR had provided specialists to some RC offices, which was judged to be "successful and cost-efficient".

Many RCs felt that business operations strategies should be promoted to a much greater extent or even made mandatory, to achieve increased economies of scale for example in transport, travel, procurement, IT, conference management, and human resource management. In this context, RCs commented that it is challenging to economize human and financial resources given the lack of harmonization of operating systems of different agencies at the headquarters level, and the lack of incentives to pursue such opportunities.

Some RCs felt that the regional capacities of entities were underused, and could be rationalized. One RC made a strong plea for a single methodology and approach by the UN system to supporting countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: while most of the UN Development System has committed to following the MAPS approach, there appeared to be different approaches by at least one regional commission, which was inefficient and counter-productive.

RCs mentioned a wide variety of challenges to aligning UN presence to meet the specific needs of the country. Some were very country-specific, others more general such as the challenge of "*moving from a largely humanitarian response to a development approach with strong resilience and humanitarian components.*"

Several RCs in middle-income countries highlighted the need to move away from direct support and to emphasize policy advice and "*innovative thinking around resource mobilization for the SDGs.*" In this regard, one RC commented that: "*our expertise approach and financing is fragmented across a large number of agencies. This impedes the UNCT from providing integrated high-level policy support on the SDGs. The biggest challenge is that the benchmark of success for UN agencies is how much they deliver. Hence chasing funding and projects become the main driver of work. The incentive structure needs to change.*"

Some RCs referred to limited RCO capacities and to the weak authority they had over UN system activities, and a complete lack of influence over which entities are represented in the country. Other RCs mentioned shortcomings in some countries on the government side, such as inadequate data, lack of planning and coordination mechanisms, government unwillingness to recognize certain national challenges, and limited government administrative capacity.

A particularly thoughtful contribution was: "*Despite the implementation of key components of delivering as one, the UNCT struggles to move forward from being principally a composite body of Secretariat entities, funds, programmes and agencies which are sectorally oriented addressing their individual mandates and governance. The country, represented by its government, would benefit from a more streamlined UN partner with more strategic focus which supposes either less UN actors or at least more streamlined UN actors on the ground. To accomplish this the RC may need more direct supervision of the country teams on areas relating to their system-wide responsibilities to better support national priorities within the SDG framework. This challenge seems particularly relevant for middle income countries where the UNCT must strengthen its provision of integrated policy support backed up by equally integrated regional and HQ support.*"

General views on aspects of implementing the QCPR resolution at country-level

Of the 52 RCs that responded to this question, several indicated their commitment to implement the QCPR provisions at country level. There were many thought-provoking contributions. The following four contributions, reproduced in full, capture both some new ideas that were mentioned, as well as many of the other ideas contained in the contributions from the other RCs:

1. From an RC in a middle-income country with a large UN presence:
   "*I applaud the SG's efforts to go far beyond what is in the current QCPR. I think it is wonderful that, for the first time in my close to 30 years with the UN, we are talking seriously about drastic measures to integrate, streamline, merge UN development, political, and humanitarian operations at HQ and on the ground. I also favour a delinking of the RR/RC functions, if this can be accompanied by firm lines of accountability by all agencies, funds and programmes to a fully empowered RC. I also very much hope that the political will* can *be found to drastically reduce and merge the many existing development agencies into a single UN development presence on the ground [many of which can barely afford to visit countries (i.e. NRAs) let alone engage effectively in any form of sustained development cooperation on the ground.]*"

2. From an RC in a middle-income country with a large UN presence and humanitarian challenges:
   "*In order to resolve persistent challenges to the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of UN Development System acting as one at the country level, corporate level barriers (agency HQ and executive boards) will need to be addressed as a first priority. The UNCT is committed to the implementation of the QCPR and is following* with *great interest the ongoing reform discussions and thinking of the new SG and DSG. The UNCT's interest and commitment to make even more relevant, efficient and effective contributions to [name of country] is there and the ongoing UNDAF evaluation and new UNDAF development provides an opportunity for the UNCT to further enhance and deepen collective work including the critical roll-out of the SDGs at national and local levels, and support to the government in reinforcing the equity goals in the [country's] Development Plan. The success of this will to a large degree depend upon the combination of consistent and clear UN organizational messaging and practical follow-through vis-à-vis their country representatives on working together and on the degree to which the global UN system collectively and individual agencies are able to simplify and streamline requirements of their country representatives and also match envisioned further UNCT level reforms with matching reforms at HQ level.*"

3. From an RC in an LDC with a large UN presence
   "*The proposal for repositioning strongly suggests a separation of the RC system from UNDP. However, merely separating the RC system from UNDP will not in itself make a big difference for coherence. For this to work, the question of financing structure for the overall UN system needs to be addressed. Only when the UN system has a financing structure that favors joint programming and operations will it be possible to make genuine inroads into UN coherence. And once this is done, a future RC system should be designed around how the financing structure works.*"

Please briefly describe any best practices and/or innovations to adapt the UNDS to the new requirements of the 2030 Agenda and or/and any improvements to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system. Please include details such as: Title: Timeframe (beginning/end): UN entities involved: Other partners involved: A brief description of: The issue that needed to be addressed The solution that was developed What was put in place? What were the results? Lessons learned.

Example:

Title: Enhancing GoG capacities in nationalization of Gender & SRH related SDG indicators
Timeframe (beginning /end): 2016 - 2020
UN entities involved: UN entities involved: UN Women, UNFPA, UNCT members
Other partners involved: National Statistics Office
The issue that needed to be addressed: Lack of baseline data with government on violence against women, SRH, child marriage related indicators among others which could aid the development of indicators related to the issues
The solution that was developed: Tech/fin support to GEOSTAT (National Statistics Office) to undertake survey on violence against women to generate baseline data for few violence-related indicators supporting government in collection of quantitative and qualitative data related to SRH, Child marriage related SDG indicators integration of SDG indicators in National Maternal and Infant Health Strategy (2017-2030) ; advocacy actions on sex segregation of targets for the nationalized indicators. Other planned activities: • include SDG monitoring, harmonization of nationalized SDG objectives with national action plan • providing space for women's NGOs participation in SDG Council and working groups • advocacy and technical support to harmonization of relevant national strategies/ action plans with SDGs and finalization of methodology for measuring certain indicators. This is a work in progress - lessons learnt to be established at the end of the project.