

A SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL UN

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations reform process is reaching a defining moment. The challenge before the international community is to match the path to Sustainable Development with appropriate reforms of the UNDS at all levels. In this regard, the regional work of the UN needs to become more coherent and efficient by fostering coordination, communication, and collaboration; and better use of its resources and assets.

Cepei and the United Nations have established a partnership to carry out research and provide recommendations on this transition. A two-phased approach to regional reform has been agreed on. The first one, focused on enhancing collaboration between different entities at the regional and sub-regional levels. The second one will look at how to re-align these assets on a more fundamental level. In coordination with the UNDS Transition Team, Cepei agreed to provide the Secretary General with recommendations to help during this transition.

Aims of this report

The main question is how to get from agreeing on the problems, to jointly implementing transformative actions as part of a regional agenda that has a clear and concise vision, a compelling narrative, and a set of practical mechanisms. That is why Cepei brought

together an interdisciplinary coalition of experts from across the development spectrum to research, analyse, and consult on practical strategies that could be effectively translated into concrete and action-oriented recommendations for the regional UNDS reform process.

There is a window of opportunity to establish ways of working that reflect the principles and spirit of the 2030 Agenda and of Sustainable Development. The UNDS reform is happening in real time and the Secretary General has advanced towards delivering the "system-wide strategic document for collective support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and the General Assembly resolution 71/243 related to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the UN system. In particular, it would seem that some of the core principles of the 2030 Agenda (leave no one behind; universality; an integrated approach that brings together economic, social and environmental transformations in a balanced manner, no-silos, interdependence) are not sufficiently embedded into regional processes, and there seems to be only sporadic progress so far. The challenge before the international community will be to match this transformative substantive agenda with adequate means to

implement it. An agenda containing ambitious goals naturally calls for equally high ambition in defining and mobilizing the means for their implementation, and the best possible use of existing assets.

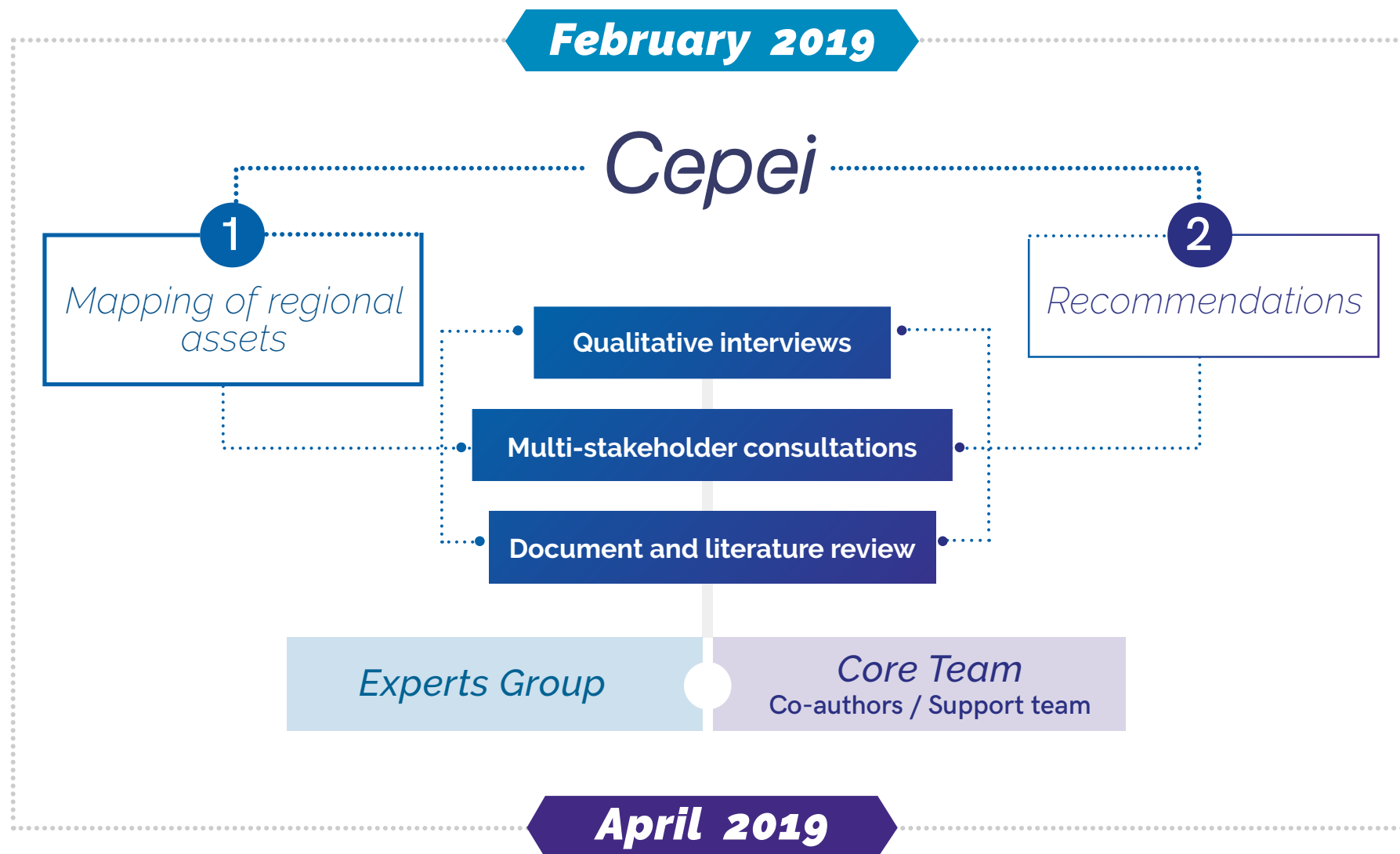
Methodology

The core research team visited all UN regions to carry out consultations with members of the UNDS, governments and experts at the regional level. As a result, not only did the research team question staff working within the UN system, but also members of civil society, academia and government in order to get a broader picture of how the regional UNDS does its work. Over 400 people got involved,

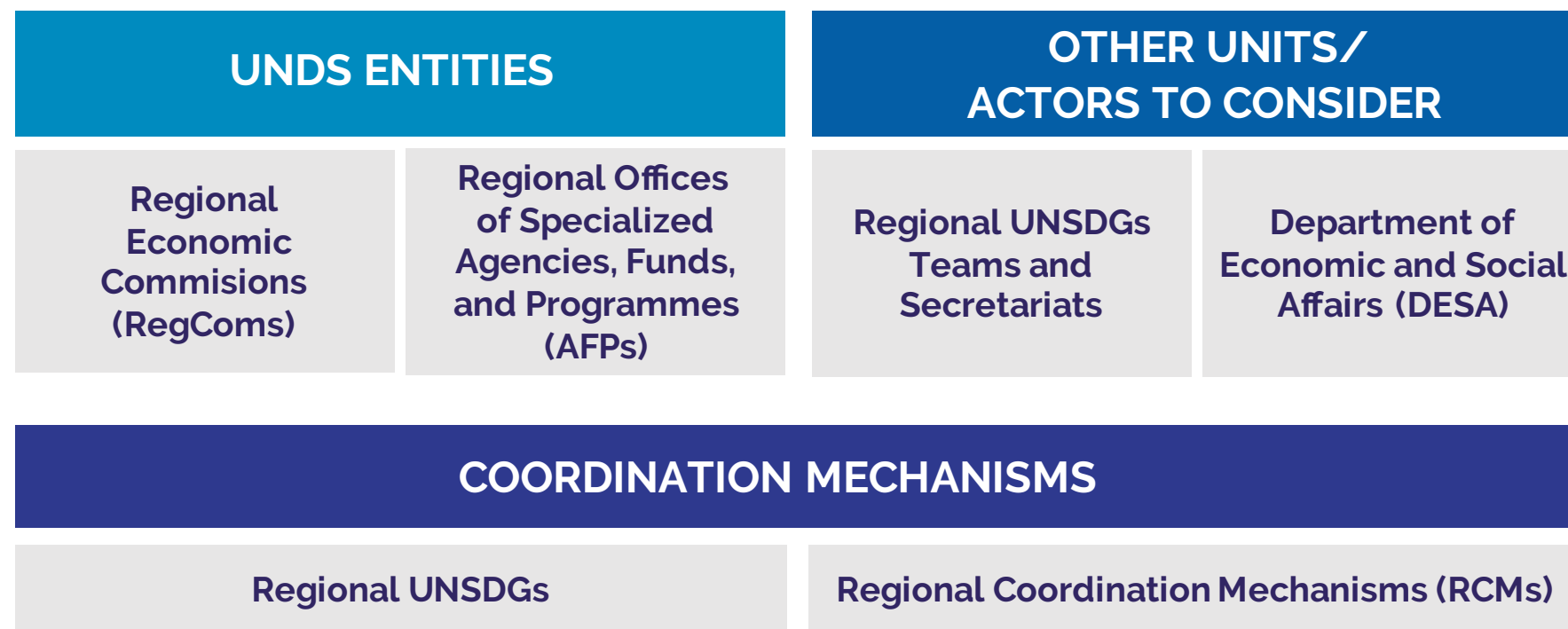
and more than 20 multi-stakeholder meetings were convened. Every interview and meeting was conducted under Chatham House rule to allow open debate and frank dialogue.

Many virtual meetings also took place, and there was a revision of documents relevant to this undertaking as well, to draw on to previous exercises and avoid overlapping and to promote coherence. The empirical evidence, on which the research is based, was gathered through three major sources of information: stakeholder perceptions, internal documents and external analysis. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the researchers looked at the broad spectrum of challenges and possible solutions, to work up suggestions and inputs for UNDS reform.

THE REQUIREMENT



THE SCOPE

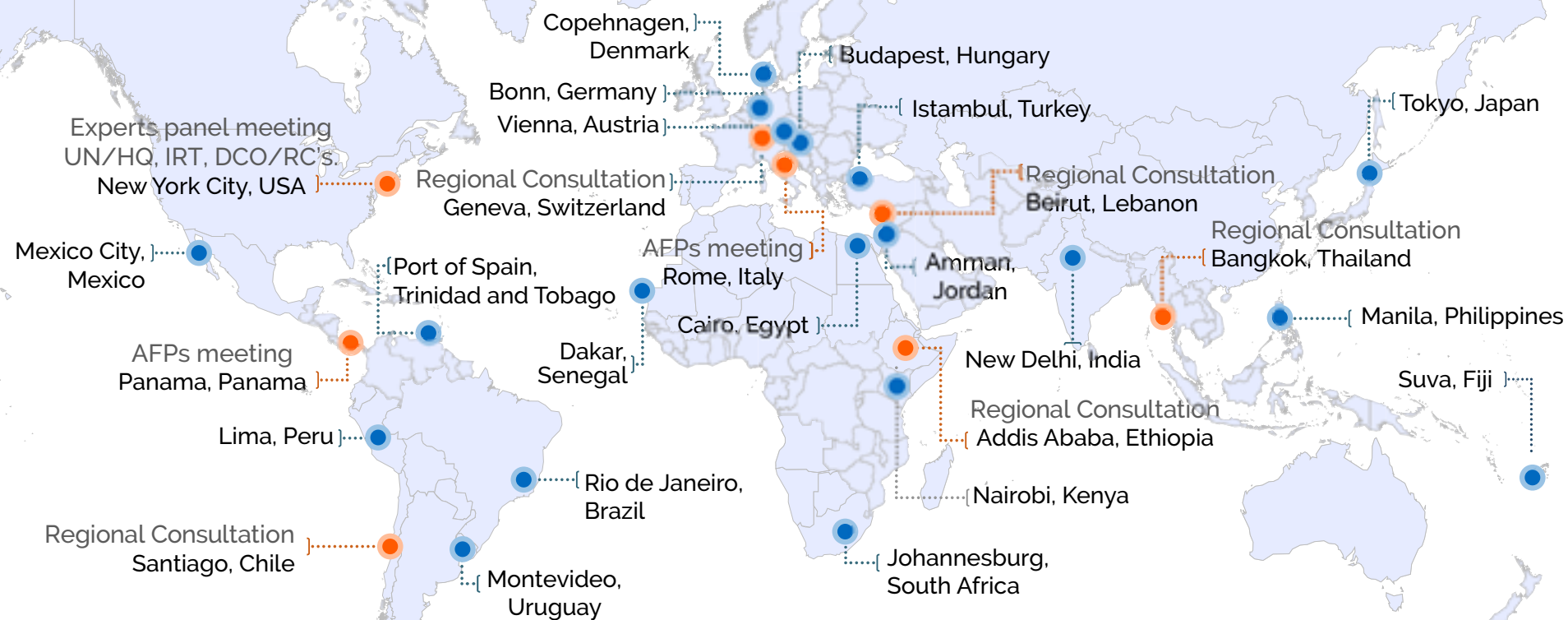


TIMEFRAME



THE CONSULTATION PROCESS*

Focus group & 400 interviews



**UN staff consultation + other stakeholders*

● Field visit
● Virtual

Acronyms and terms

AFP	Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the UN
Chatham House rule	When a meeting is held where participants are allowed to use the information shared but are not allowed to reveal the identity or affiliation of the speakers.
CT	Country Team
DCO	Development Coordinator Officer
DESA	Department of Social and Economic Affairs
DSG	Deputy Secretary General
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FFD	Financing for Development
HPLF	High Level Political Forum
MAF	Management and Accountability Framework
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RBB	Result-based Budget
REC	Regional Economic Commissions
RegComs	Regional Commissions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UNSDS	UN Sustainable Development System
URCM	Unified Regional Collaboration Mechanism
VNR	Voluntary National Reports

MAJOR FINDINGS

In this section, we report back on the research team's main findings from our asset mapping, surveys, interviews, meetings and reading. We look first at the strengths of and opportunities for the UN system at the regional level, and then we summarize weaknesses and threats.

Strengths & opportunities

The regions offer comparative advantages for the UN's value proposition

- Close to regional processes and politics
- Better understanding of power relations, sensitive issues, regional challenges and trends
- Wider knowledge of challenges and opportunities, synergies and commonalities, inter-relations and communications
- Engaging with and brokering non-state stakeholders is a significant opportunity
- UN trusted by people as well as States. Charter states "we the people", and that involves e.g.: civil society, academia, private sector and governments
- Private sector and civil society frequently have a wider scope of operations beyond national borders. A closer identification of these potential delivery partners of the UN is only possible if the UN holds an active, focused and strategic regional presence with clear objectives on what to deliver and with whom it engages in partnerships

- The 2030 Agenda also has the mandate to "leave no one behind". A call to include marginalized communities in decisions that affect them
- New and results oriented businesses models should be developed

There is substantial human capacity in the regions

- The regions have a strong potential to provide expertise both for transboundary issues, and country needs and requests
- This expertise has a better understanding of the context of regions and countries, in terms of challenges, cultural backgrounds, economic realities, social features and environmental concerns
- There has been an over-reliance on headquarter experts in the past

The concept of Sustainable Development offers opportunity for coherent narrative

- Sustainable Development provides the UN with a unique integrated platform allowing different entities to work together, develop synergies, and combine financial resources and skills
- Regional Sustainable Development reviews are considered successful, but are not sufficiently linked to the HLPFs. This could present a chance for enhancing intra and cross regional cooperation

Sensitive issues (human rights, cultural, political, religious) can be discussed at regional level

- Important issues can gain visibility and generate actions in the regional level. E.g.: gender equality depends on cultural, political, social and even religious contexts. The regional level allows discussions and actions that might not be possible in the country level

Right level to deal with specific issues, trends

- Transboundary issues find answers and solutions at the regional level
- Regional presence of UN allows a better understanding of the regional dynamics, trends, relations of power, common issues, political and economic developments, and environmental needs. This allows the setting of strategies and programs to better support States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- Integrated approach to sustainable development implies a balance between its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) and a collective effort to face challenges that necessarily go beyond national borders (i.e.: climate change, ocean pollution, massive movements of people, tax matters)
- Coordinated and collaborative work at the regional level thus becomes a requirement for the achievement of Sustainable Development

Trust in the UN brand makes it an ideal broker

- In this context, the UN could encourage countries and regions to find common solutions to common problems and challenges

Weaknesses & threats

No convincing narrative for the regional value proposition

- The regional level is “under-appreciated” to the point of being perceived as “invisible”
- Lack of ambitious internal and external communications strategies

Stakeholders experience the UN as a disparate set of entities.

- They want one entry point, one analysis, one source of support
- Fragmentation at the UN headquarter level is reflected in the regions
- Systemic problems have not been tackled for decades

Weak data ecosystems

- Lack of timely (incl. real time) and sufficiently disaggregated regional data
- Poor joint collaborative and working efforts between different UN data researchers
- The specialized agencies are considered in need of strengthened coordination more so than the statistical agencies within the Secretariat (e.g.: DESA, Regional Commissions)
- The regional statistical committees are

important to other UN entities to discuss data work in each region

- Lack of resources (financial, human and technological) to promote the use of non-traditional data sources

Low trust and understanding about and between UN entities

- Questions about UN's ability to deliver on the ground in an effective and efficient manner
- Perception of UN as heavy bureaucracy unfit to adapt to constant change
- UN entities distrust ability of other UN entities. Openly question their relevance
- Overlapping of mandates promotes competition for funds
- Integrated nature of sustainable development challenges requires flexible mandates, dialogue and collaborative work, rather than a definition in silos properly diagrammed through thematic mandates

UN faces resource constraints in the medium term. Regions are particularly under threat

- Global economic constraints will affect country contributions to UN regular budget
- Insufficient funding is perceived by all regions as primary reason behind competition between UN entities. (Decreasing funding will likely imply increasing competition)
- Resources may increase in accordance with performance/impact
- Business model is unclear and poorly aligned between entities
- Lack of strategic, uncoordinated spending makes it inefficient

System itself is biggest barrier to change

- UN bureaucracy living in a comfort zone, resisting rather than embracing change
- Old-fashioned way of doing business, very hierarchical
- Silo-based approaches are still common
- Cultural lethargy

Impact of regional outputs is regularly questioned

- Perceived as producing more meetings than concrete and useful products

Distance is one reason why regional entities don't work well together

- There is an unequal distribution of UN offices at the regional level, which responds to the interests of one particular organization and not to a collective/regional/sub-regional need
- Supply, not demand driven approach

UN staff do not think as the UN, but as their specific entities. This undermines collaborative approaches

- Concern about the future contributes to defensiveness and lack of trust
- Organizational incentives to survive undermine attempts to collaborate and enhance impact
- UN entities should be engaged in a system where they are not competing, but working towards a common goal
- Funders are not helping shape collaboration at the regional level

Non-government actors feel excluded from UN processes

- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is seen as a responsibility of governments, not taking into account a wide range of stakeholders that can play a role in it
- Establish clear lines of accessing inputs for non-UN actors
- Knowledge sharing between UN and stakeholders seems to be insufficient. Linking knowledge areas within organizations is not considered enough

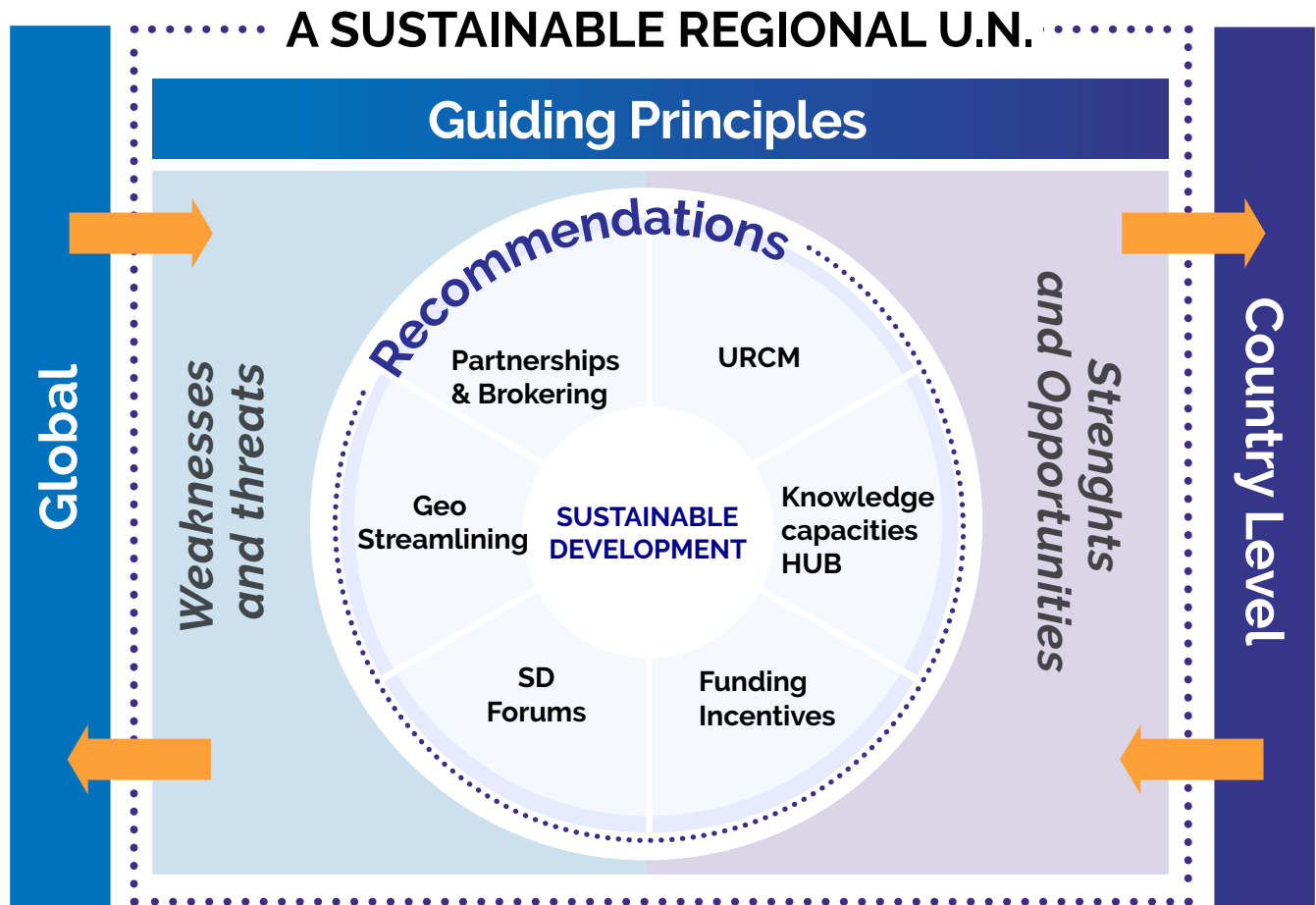
Impact is poorly monitored

- Low accountability of regional activities
- Limited compliance reporting mechanisms or quality assurance of the regional assets
- Lack of transparency

Weak human resource oversight

- A tendency to hire external consultants, rather than working with other UN entities staff that may have the same (or even better) capabilities as those required of consultants
- Limited knowledge of what human resources exist and their roles.

OUR VISION: A Sustainable Regional UN



What is the importance of UN's work at the regional level? While many of our interviewees tried to answer that question, few were able to do so in a compelling way. Some believed that the regional level could be downgraded for cost and efficiencies sake, to reinvest elsewhere in the UN System. And while others

defended the regional work, few could find words that encouraged and engaged.

The regional dimension of the UN has long been under-appreciated. Sometimes it is seen as a duplication of efforts that belong to the country or global levels. Often it is not seen at all.

We want to change that.

In today's international system, polarization and intolerance appear to be on the increase. In a time when many describe a "crisis of multilateralism" it could be the regional level that rides to the rescue. While collaboration can be hard to see at the global level, in the regions the impacts of working together can be faster and clearer.

The role of the regions, for so long overlooked and forgotten, could now become crucial for delivering on the promise of SDG progress. They are critical to the UN's mission, and they should be the core of regional level efforts and the basis of its narrative. Much has been achieved since the turn of the millennium, but there is so much more to do. And even though the ambition of the SDGs is inspiring, it's also daunting.

The UN is the ideal broker at the regional level, a hope for so many of us. It cannot continue to underperform. We propose a renewed engagement with countries and other stakeholders. Our vision invites a real transformation in minds and behaviours. We want to motivate you to allow modernity to reach the UN hallways.

We cannot understand and manage migration, water, security, natural disasters, trade or pollution if we don't value the regions. The UN cannot solve or contribute in situations and challenges if it goes with a very narrow vision

of countries' realities. Nor can the UN afford the luxury of underperformance at the regional level. The regional understanding of issues, problems, challenges and opportunities could give a renewed perspective on how we can handle and overcome common obstacles.

In a complex context, the UN has to organize itself, modernize its bureaucracy at all levels and transform the UNDS entities to deliver with the objective of making an impact in their support to Member States in delivering on the national commitments regarding the SDGs. The UN does not have the luxury to wait more decades to adjust and adapt to the changes of the international system. If it wants to remain relevant and strengthen its relations with different stakeholders it should really reform to transform its methods of work aligning them to the current management, political and economic trends that influence our times.

All of this has made it quite clear for us, that the regional and sub-regional levels should by no means be downgraded.

Organizing the regions into an effective and collaborative force for change has been an oversight that can no longer be afforded. No country is isolated from its region, and all regions are integrated to one another as well. Also, countries tend to look around their neighbourhoods for lessons learned, best practices and appropriate methods and procedures to advance in their own policies. There are a number of issues that not only

affect or take place inside country boundaries, but are actually cross border, transboundary and/or cross region. Plus, the regional level is an ideal platform to develop data and evidence (analytical), organize programmatic interventions (operational), and exchange knowledge and experiences among countries (convening).

A new motto for the regions from now on should be: **Demonstrate collective impact**

Demonstrate: It is not enough to have an impact; you need to demonstrate it if you want to have continued support from funders and other stakeholders. So first you need to monitor impact, and then to communicate it – because failure to communicate it well will result in less support.

Collective: This is the challenge. All the entities may well look at their own impact, but external stakeholders don't just want to see that – they want to see the UN's overall impact, working together.

Impact: This is what it comes down to, in the end. What impact is being achieved for stakeholders (Member States, other organisations, and ultimately “we the people”)

The regional level has a niche on its own promoting a better understanding and handling of regional challenges and issues. Apart from this attribute the regional UN could also contribute to promote the global initiatives including norms and regulations and others to be better understood and implemented at the national level.

We envision a future for the UN at the regional level which is collaborative, innovative, open and effective. In which the UN's regional bodies and teams are carrying out some of the organization's most relevant and exciting work, recognized by governments and other stakeholders, in the progressive media, and considered a role model for other organizations.

To many that will seem so ambitious as to be impossible. But it is possible. To get there, the UN must carve out an important role for itself, building on a unique set of attributes that allow it to operate more freely and powerfully than other relevant stakeholders. Through political will, acceptance of change as a positive and necessary action, and clear guidance from the leaders within the organization, this shift can happen.

The UN must prove to the doubters that change is possible, with determination and clarity of vision.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Building on this vision, and on our main findings, a number of principles emerged which have guided our recommendations.

Results-oriented. All the work the UN does at the regional level must clearly be linked to results. This is far from the case at the moment. Unless impact is demonstrated, the threat to the regions is likely to continue.

Flexible. Whatever happens, structures must be kept flexible and adaptable to the constant changing international system in order to allow the UN to respond to the different challenges presented over time. To maintain its relevance, the UN must modernize its bureaucracy and make procedures, skills and capacities more adjustable.

Collaborative. The UN's development dimension must overcome particular interests that hinder its ability to make a real impact. The current fragmented approach should be transformed, with a vigorous resolve, into an integrated understanding of our present and future challenges. The question of collaboration (and sometimes coordination) goes beyond simple functional necessity within a bureaucracy. Efficient and effective collaboration is a question of responsibility to contribute to the well-being of thousands of millions around the world. It is an expression of

moving from words to actions. Collaboration is built on personal relationships and individual leadership, not just processes, and will need to be embedded.

Open. To remain a reliable and predictable partner working with Member States and other stakeholders, the UNSDS should be transparent in presenting what it does, how, why and with whom. Visibility begins with transparency and accountability. It is not just a question of communication or publicity, it is a question of content, integrity and vision. Member States and other stakeholders should be able to understand the complex structure and engage with it appropriately.

Aligned. The intention is that the work of the UN at the regional level is aligned in three ways. First, horizontally, between the various UN entities working at the regional level. Second, vertically, between national and global levels. And third, externally, with other relevant non-UN regional organizations.

Confident. The 2030 Agenda's ambition and integrated nature require a sustainable and robust regional level. Any doubt about the future importance of the regional level should be swiftly dealt with by the UN leadership. The reform should enhance both regional support to national level work and the continued

expansion of regional capacities. An adequate quantity and quality of funding is needed (i.e. predictable, flexible, effective and efficient). Better alignment and incentives will be required.

Light bureaucracy. The answer to the current crisis is not creating new bureaucratic layers but an enabling environment for more and better collaboration.

Well-communicated. A clear narrative needs a good communication strategy, one that concentrates on internal as well as external stakeholders, helping them understand what each part of the system is doing, and how they can engage.

Linking with other UN reform processes. The full collective power of the UN is needed to address the SDG's at all levels. Different reform processes have been/are being carried out by the UN: the adoption of QCPR, the changes in the RC system, the new Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), the Funding Compact, changes in the UNDAF. Synergies between these processes and the regional level should increase coherence.

"If the UN wants to be successful it can't exclude the regional level. No soccer team can win their games without midfield players" (Academia Representative. Latin America)



RECOMMENDATIONS

In our analysis, the UN makes three core contributions at the regional level:

- analytical (data, research, analysis, advice)
- operational (programme delivery and support)
- brokering (bringing people and organizations together for a purpose)¹

But the work of the UN is less impactful than it could be because of weak collaboration between its parts. Based on our findings and guiding principles we propose strengthening that collaboration both horizontally (between the regional UNSDS) and vertically (from global to national via the regions, and vice versa).

At the heart of our proposal is a unified regional collaboration mechanism (URCM) as a first

step towards a renewed comprehensive and integrated organizational culture that could actually transform the way the UN delivers at the regional level. All relevant UN entities should deliver at the regional level according to their capacities and mandate, working under a URCM, in an integrated attempt to promote sustainable development. Under this approach, the various activities of the UN would be differentiated, mandates would not excessively overlap and the contribution of the UN would be integrated, comprehensive, and result-oriented.

Alongside the URCM we make six other major recommendations, and a range of sub-recommendations.

¹ The last of these needs special attention. The regional UN should be a platform for all sectors of society, not just governments.

1. Single thematic focus: sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development should be embedded throughout the UN's work at the regional level.

In September 2015, the Member States of the UN adopted a new overarching paradigm within which to carry out development efforts: sustainable Development. Everything at the UN is now seen through the prism of Sustainable Development with its three dimensions (economy, society, environment). While the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (and their 169 targets) are time-limited (2015-2030), the concept of sustainable development will outlast them.

The beauty of the sustainable development concept is that it covers all aspects of what is needed from the UN at the regional level.² During the MDG era the UN focused particularly on the eight MDGs but continued to work on many issues not mentioned in the millennium

declaration. Some regions of the world, with a smaller incidence of extreme poverty, did not feel closely aligned with the MDG concept. That meant that there was no overarching set of objectives for the UN globally and regionally. Today, for the first time the UN (Sustainable) Development System has an opportunity to gather all of its work under one theme. When anyone asks what the UNSDS does at the regional level there is now a simple answer: "We support sustainable development and the SDGs!"

The ability to have one simple phrase to summarise the vast and complex work of the UNSDS is a prize that should not be underestimated. Many major international organizations from the private sector and civil

² While there may be some (few) issues of substance at the regional level that are not covered by the Sustainable Development Goals as such, the broader concept of sustainable development certainly does.

society struggle to define their global work in one simple sentence. The UN now has that and it should cherish it.

The sustainable development concept gives the UN a unique opportunity to work together, to join efforts, to share programs and projects, to establish a common platform for coordination, to focus on delivering on the ground.

The priority for the UN at all levels (global, regional, sub-regional and national) should be to align itself to better support Member States and other stakeholders in strategies to implement their SDG commitments regarding the 2030 Agenda. Every development activity should be measured in terms of how it contributes to making this ambitious 2030 Agenda a reality on the ground.

There is also a downside from having such a broad mandate: it is harder to prioritise limited resources. At any one time the UN development system in a particular region may now be expected to respond to the entire range of sustainable development concerns, putting pressure on tight budgets. That is why

coordination and resources are as important as ever (see later recommendations). Each region will take priority decisions based on analysis of demand and need, as well as how other non-UN entities may complement the work of the UN.

Mandate the Regional Commissions to cover all aspects of Sustainable Development

All Regional Commissions should be explicitly mandated to work on all aspects of sustainable development. They currently focus primarily on economic and social issues. This changed mandate should be reflected in the way they are referred to: either Regional Sustainable Development Commissions (RSDCs) or simply Regional Commissions (RegComs). (This does not mean that those RSDCs with a strong brand should necessarily change their acronym). This does not mean the RegComs should work on every SDG target – prioritisation will always be required. But it does mean they should be prepared to oversee all these issues in some way.

More investment in environmental dimension

There is no Sustainable Development without a healthy environment, and environmental issues are often, by their essence, transboundary. Air pollution, oceans contamination, ecosystems management and many other environmental issues simply cannot be managed only at the national level alone. However, the environmental dimension of sustainable development is the weakest at the regional level. This needs to change.³ The financial efficiency of fostering environmental protection should be underlined in the context of the UN reform.⁴

“Regions can do things that are hard to be done at the country level due to political constraints” (UN staff representative, Asia-Pacific region)

“The UN support is an asset while working in transformative social policies at the national level” (State representative, Latin America and the Caribbean region)

Continue the renaming process

Words matter. “Sustainable development” is a fundamentally different concept to “development” and it is important to start using the term consistently. The UN development group, UNDG, which oversees the UN's development work, has changed its name in accordance with its new mandate, to the UNSDG. The old UNDAF will now be known as the UNSDCF. We recommend that the “UN Development System” should now be known as the “UN Sustainable Development System”. There will be other examples where this evolution is necessary and useful.

3 The United Nations Environment Assembly took a step in the right direction during its Third Session (Nairobi, 4-6 December 2017): Its resolution 3/3 decides to include a standing agenda item of the United Nations Environment Assembly on its contributions to the meetings of the HLPF, to provide timely substantive inputs to the annual meetings of the HLPF, and requests “the Executive Director to ensure that the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme work closely with Member States and the RegComs to provide timely inputs in preparing for the annual meetings of the regional forums on sustainable development in order to enable environmental sustainability issues, including emerging ones, in the respective regions and the relevant resolutions of the Environment Assembly to be integrated in the submissions and policy recommendations to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.” (paragraphs 2, 6 and 7).

4 For example, according to UNEP every dollar spent restoring degraded forests can result in \$30 in economic benefits

2. Prioritise partnerships and brokering

Prioritise the involvement of non-government stakeholders in plans and activities, with the UN playing a brokering role.

Agenda 2030 is a common creation, involving all stakeholders from the outset. It goes beyond the responsibility of governments and should be seen in a broader spectrum to integrate different actors of the society. Its implementation should involve them all as well so as to "leave no one behind" in the implementation stage. Each sector has specific capacities and can contribute to the integrated approach this ambitious agenda deserves.

Convening power is a crucial UN intangible asset at the regional level. This, in combination with another huge asset that is that UN branding creates trust, could promote stakeholder's engagement in UN regional efforts to support national SDGs implementation.

However, engaging with non-government stakeholders is still not part of the UN's core instincts. Their participation in SDG implementation often only seen as part of a

moral "check list". More effort, a conscious change of approach, and investment is required to transform this aspect of the UN's work at the regional level.

The UN regional level has the possibility to convene different people, from all sectors, and should set out a plan to integrate non-government stakeholders into its plans and activities. Better use of the UN's convening power to bring together non-government actors could also contribute to finding answers to the UN's funding problems.

"The SDGs are the only Global Social contract we have" (Private Sector representative, Asia-Pacific region)

"CSOs should be internal, and not external, participants of UN decision making" (CSOs representative, Asia-Pacific region)

"The UN is accountable to governments, not people" (CSO representative, Western Asia region)

"Reform should focus on common interest, without selfish approaches" (State representative, Asia-Pacific region)

Issue-based networks

Bringing together UN expertise and the expertise of other stakeholders in the region in Issue-based Networks could be a truly innovative way of working together on transboundary issues (i.e. migration, water, gender, youth, etc.).

These Issue-based Networks should bring together academia, think-thanks, CSO, industry associations, etc. to provide regions with analytical work on trends and data that feed into the URCM's work. This could be a shared operational channel to facilitate non-government stakeholders' involvement and synergies that could help governments implement the SDGs.

"The regions should map the communities of practices and networks that exist" (academia, European region)

Regional Commissions should open up

The Regional Commissions in particular are considered to be at the early stages of such an open approach. Their DNA is to respond to Member States, while other stakeholders are treated as something of an afterthought. Nevertheless, some RegComs are actively engaging other sectors. They should step up these efforts to play a lead role in the strategic collaboration we are proposing. They could, among other things, support non-government stakeholder capacity building through in-person and virtual courses specially designed for them.

"We support the work of regional conferences because it promotes exchanges, enhances results and opens participation to non-governmental actors" (State representative, Latin America and the Caribbean region)

3. Unified Regional Collaboration Mechanism (URCM)

The R-UNSDG and the RCM should evolve and merge into a Unified Regional Collaboration Mechanism (URCM) that will integrate all UN entities in a region.

A recurrent view regarding the effectiveness of UNSDS entities ability to work together at the regional level dealt with the difficulties of having two separate coordination mechanisms, the RCM and UNSDG. Some would prefer nothing to change, and other stress the fact that overlaps between the two mechanisms result in confusion and inefficiencies.

With the intention of increasing the system's flexibility and improving the way the UNSDS delivers at the regional level, we propose that both mechanisms merge into one. A Unified Regional Collaboration Mechanism (URCM) would help the UNSDS entities collaborate at the regional level in accordance to their core capacities. Each of the existing regions should have its own URCM, with all entities participating under equal conditions.

The main strategic oversight should be chaired by the RegCom, and should also lead on research and analysis. An Operational oversight, with regular technical meetings,

should be chaired by the UNDP posted at the regional hub, given its operational capacity. The Management & Administration oversight could be chaired by the UNDCO posted at the regional hub, but since it is a new actor at the regional level, we believe the UNSDS should give it a more thorough consideration.

"Even if we sometimes work on a national basis, the problems we face are regional by nature" (UN Staff representative, Western Asia region)

"We have no incentives to work together" (UN Staff representative, African region)

"Different parts of the UN System are like different animals. They should learn to live together" (UN Staff representative, Asia-Pacific region)

"UN is a segmented system at the regional level" (UN Staff representative, African region)

"Lack of coherence across UN affects RegComs capabilities" (CSO representative, Western Asia region)

Strategic oversight

A strategic collaboration approach will look inter alia on intergovernmental dialogue, analysis, norm setting, or specialized debates. This is the reason why this mechanism should be chaired by the RegComs in each region, with the active participation of all the UNSDS entities, engaging closely with Member States and, crucially, other stakeholders (as part of the increased openness suggested above). Needless to say, that this proposal is not changing the mandates of any UNSDS entity, and if there is a need to do so, that depends directly on the UN's own evaluation and assessment. UN entities would have the opportunity to share information, evaluate their work, the progress of the region, the impact of their strategies and the creation of forward looking visions that will keep them delivering and adapting to the continued changing international environment. From this work, projects and initiatives could be developed for implementation by the operational segment of the URCM.

The Deputy Secretary General and DESA and/or its representatives should be invited to attend the meetings of the Strategic segment allowing regional and global levels to align their work and for the global UNSDS entities to have a clearer understanding of regional dynamics and challenges.

"RegComs are platforms for knowledge sharing between regions" (member state, European region)

"RegComs develop standards at regional level, that have global impact" (member State, European region)

Operational oversight

This function should focus in designing and implementing projects for transboundary issues. Because of its nature it should be chaired by the UNDP representative located at the regional hub. It could coordinate cooperation requested by the RCs at the country level in need of expertise that could be found at the UNSDS regional entities. In this regard, the knowledge and capacities hub mentioned later in this report could strengthen the support the UN gives at the country level.

Most UN programmes are still delivered at the country level, but many issues require transboundary emphasis and activities as well, tackling needs either of sub-regions or simply ad hoc groups of countries facing a specific problem. Occasionally there may also be the need for programmes across a whole region, such as the capacity development in economic statistics carried out by some RegComs.

We envision this segment to be able to design and implement transboundary projects working in technical meetings between the relevant AFPs, with interested Member States and other relevant stakeholders. Experts at

the technical meetings should assess the feasibility of the projects presented and their impact on the ground.

Projects should normally start at the request of one or several Member States, depending on the issue and the coordination among States in one region. It could also involve States in different regions working together to achieve one or several SDGs. Alternatively, it may be a project considered necessary by one or several UNSDS entities, and built accordingly. Either way, the project's roadmap and responsibilities should be agreed at the regular technical meetings. The technical meetings should review projects, processes and impact.

Management & Administrative oversight

A single management and administrative hub could be created at the regional level to integrate all the UNSDS entities needs in this field. Within the URCM, a common office for management and administration could allow the UNSDS to better organize its operations and benefit all entities delivering at the regional and country levels. Since there is now a regional presence of the DCO, the UNSDS could probably work synergies and make arrangements for these offices to coordinate these functions for all AFPs delivering at the regional level and if appropriate the country level. Some economies of scale would be generated alleviating costs to the system.

This will not only show a more efficient use of resources but could promote the integration and/or alignment of software and procedures that will certainly benefit the whole UNSDS operation at all levels. A single office could create more coherence and common practices in reporting, accountability, back-office, performance evaluation, accounting system, human resources, procurement, ICT, communication, etc. In addition, a common office could help the UN to have the actual picture of personnel and expenses better, at any given time, thus facilitating planning. Such a vision could use performance evaluations to strengthen collaboration at all levels, and especially at the regional level among different entities.

A single office could encourage the AFPs to make changes in the way they operate on the ground allowing them to become more flexible and adaptable in their presence focusing their job in delivering with concrete operational activities and projects, because this single office would alleviate them from administrative and management responsibilities. The UNSDS entities should negotiate the relevant arrangements to make this possible. This proposal could align the AFPs to the current business operations reform of the Secretariat that contemplates the Global Shared Service Centres.

Having a clear mapping of the regional assets and capacities at the URCM will allow the system to coordinate its strategies better, deliver on policies and make an efficient use of resources and staff knowledge. This mapping will be compared to the global and national one, to decide on a more efficient use of assets at all levels.

We are aware of the current reform processes regarding the Funding Compact and the new UN Management and Accountability Framework (MAF). In this context, we recognize the importance to align our proposal with these developments happening at the same time.

“Bureaucracy is eroding UN development discourse” (TT/Academia representative, Western Asia region)

“Today, the United Nations Development System is not prepared either globally or regionally for the holistic work required for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda” (UN Staff, Latin America and the Caribbean region)

Focus on sub-regions according to need

Our proposal considers that the three oversights all deal with sub-regional issues and projects. If any region depending on its characteristics considers that a segment of the URCM should be consolidated to deal with a particular sub-region, it up to the relevant actors to make such decisions.

Work to support the SDGs at global, regional and national level should be more closely aligned.

The United Nations system entities at the global, regional and country levels all have an important contribution to make to the development of national capacities to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Work at the three different levels is necessary and complementary. Two areas where even greater alignment would be helpful is the support for the Voluntary National Review Process and support for national statistical capacity building.

Better data is central to delivering the SDGs. The UN's role is crucial at national, regional and global level. Existing capacities need to be better leveraged and more closely aligned to ensure the United Nations system delivers in an integrated way. The regional level is a crucial component and it is important that this is fully recognized. Regional Commissions support Member States Statistical Groupings through regional forums which frame Member States priorities and develop important regional strategies/roadmaps for statistical work e.g. Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa. It is crucial that at regional level, United Nations system entities act as a coordinated, coherent and integrated system. RegComs should have a lead role in ensuring coherence.

It is important that there is full alignment on statistical work at regional and global level. With this in mind a strategic framework for

statistical capacity development to deliver the SDGs should be established setting out the roles and areas of work for entities at global, regional and national level to help to align the funding, functions, governance and organizational arrangements.

Similarly, for the advancement of Voluntary National Reviews, work at regional level is a crucial complement to work at national level to conduct country led reviews and reviews by the high-level political forum. Because VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, Regional level peer reviews have proven to be extremely valuable, in many respects adding more value than HLPF review. While some flexibility is necessary, it is important that the three levels of review fully align.

DESA and the Regional Commissions should be mandated to work closely together on all statistical analysis and research. New mechanisms are necessary, but better use should be made of existing coordination mechanisms. The Deputy Secretary General in her role as chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group should be responsible for ensuring overall alignment including between UN DESA and the RegComs to generate policy exchange, complementarities, data and analysis sharing, building bridges to tackle challenges. We are aware of the current process to reform DESA and we believe that any reform of DESA should harmonize its work with the RegComs.

"The SDGs are still something very external to the European Union" (UN staff, European region)

"We don't know the annual programme of DESA to see how to align our work on it" (UN staff, European region)

Regional impact report

RegComs should publish a yearly or biennial report on the impact of the UN regional entities in supporting national-level efforts to achieve the SDGs. This report could be headed by RegComs and supported by the other URCM members, and must include information about the work of AFPs and any other UN entity working in the respective region. This annual report could be presented at the Sustainable Development Regional Forums as an input for debates, towards the HLPF gathering and in support of 2030 Agenda follow-up process.

Accountability has many dimensions, and transparency is one of them. In such a complex UN system, it is difficult for an outsider to identify responsibilities and performances of the different UNSDS entities, especially when their activities, sometimes, do overlap. Reporting is an essential dimension of accountability. However, making thousands of reports every year does not make the organization more accountable or more transparent.

In the case of UNSDS at the regional level aiming at performing better to support Member States in their implementation of the

2030 Agenda, reporting could respond to a consolidated and collaborative process. In situations where two or more UNSDS entities join efforts with human, financial and logistic resources to deliver according to the Member States request, common reporting could be established as a good practice. In the event that governance bodies hold joint sessions, common reporting becomes a real possibility. A more integrated reporting mechanism could enable Member States to keep track of what the UN does.

The UNSDS with the RegComs and AFPs at the regional level could have a division of labour regarding the reports they have to produce on policy and overlooking the countries, sub-regions and regions with more analysis, lessons learned, best practices and so forth, that will actually help Member States take decisions on issues regarding the 2030 Agenda. The RegComs would be the natural scenario for delivering such reports. On more operational issues on the ground, the AFPs have more expertise and could produce reports coordinating within the operational activities oversight of the URCM. Collaboration and sharing information among the different UNSDS entities could be very useful for Member States and other stakeholders that would like to participate in the implementation of the SDGs.

Practical recommendations in each report, compared analysis, peer reviews, and other tools to consolidate knowledge could become

good practices for the UN to communicate what it does and why UN involvement at sub-regional or regional levels does matter. Because of the legitimacy associated to the UN, the reports could really make a difference and help advance SDG implementation. But for this to happen they should have a presentation that is accessible and appealing to wider audiences.

Performance evaluation to promote collaboration

All staff evaluations should review collaboration with other UN entities and non-UN stakeholders as a key performance indicator. Changing organizational culture is hard. Lack of collaboration between UN entities is too often the norm, as is a focus on the demands of Member States over and above listening to the requests of other stakeholders. One well-established means of shifting working habits is to include certain behaviours or activities in performance evaluations of both senior and junior staff.

“Partnerships are not an option, they are mandatory” (UN Staff representative, Western Asia region)

“We need internal collaboration more than coordination” (UN Staff representative, African region)

“Europe is one step ahead of collaboration; is a model on how to work together” (UN staff, European region)

Strong internal and external communications strategies

The impact of strong communications work may not be easily quantifiable, but it pays off in the medium term. Keeping a clear narrative is very important, because it helps promote transparency. In times of funding constraints, communicating impact has never been more crucial.

Having clear and transparent information helps avoid costly overlaps. It is important to make sure external communications (press offices and officials) don't overshadow the importance of an effective internal communications strategy. Visibility of the work that is being made and of the projects each player at the regional level is managing, is not only important to the outside audience (campaigns and such) but to the inside audience as well. Strong internal communication does help create a sense of community and helps organizations work towards collective goals. Right now, that priority would be 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

Staff members are the best brand managers and influencers, helping sustain a compelling and informative narrative that helps communicate horizontally to the whole spectrum: upwards toward the global levels, downwards towards the national levels, inside the regional level and to external parties.

Single regional website

The UNSDS should create a comprehensive and integrated website with the core capacities and portfolios of all UN entities. The platform could also include the capacities of governmental cooperation agencies, NGOs and other civil society actors. The platform should also include the requests and needs of Member States. This should be a platform to allow Member States and other stakeholders to see the portfolios of the different entities in terms of their respective mandates in analysis, norm setting, convening and delivering on the ground. It could be a useful resource to design projects allowing inter-agency cooperation.

Requests by Member States could generate a search. For example, for a particular entry point, information regarding core capacities and offers from all relevant UN entities is available so the UN, Member States and other stakeholders have an idea of who does what.

The website would be managed by a small team and overseen by the URCM.

Link closely with the UNDAF

The reform of the UNDAF into the UNSDCF offers a unique entry point for ensuring that issues that have ramifications beyond national mandates are adequately reflected. Each UNSDCF should be aligned to country priorities, helping to identify how national action and

policies contribute to fulfilling transboundary considerations, but also with regional policy frameworks and agreements establishing specific regional standards, and sustainable development related commitments. To make it possible, country analysis should integrate regional frameworks, trends, opportunities and risks towards the 2030 Agenda implementation in the country context.

“UNDAF should not be a shopping list, but should be a more demand driven strategic programme”, (CSO representative, European region)

Ensure information about country visits is managed appropriately

Regional colleagues are often unaware of visits by UN colleagues from other regions or global headquarters. This causes distrust and disorder. Visits by global UN representatives should be arranged with regional and sub-regional counterparts, as well as with national colleagues. If regional colleagues visit

countries, the same principle applies.

Enhance cross-regional communication

The URCM Strategic oversight in each region also has the responsibility to hold meetings with other URCMs to exchange information and enhance the inter-regional dialogue sharing perspectives, experiences and impact of the UN activities in sustainable development in the different regions. In these meetings, the relevant entities could also discuss the challenges of harmonizing this global 2030 Agenda with more regional or conference related agendas.⁵

Cross regional cooperation should be promoted regarding needs assessment, local capacities, levels of expertise and available technology for practical solutions, lessons-learned in project implementation, local solutions, collaborative approach among different stakeholders involved – governments, NGOs, Think Tanks, UNSDS, private sector.⁶ Cross-regional work also facilitates negotiation processes and

5 As a point of illustration, some of them are 2063 Africa Agenda, ASEAN Vision 2025, Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, 2030 Agenda Roadmap for Asia Pacific, Addis Ababa Action Plan on Financing for Development and Beirut Consensus on Financing for Development, UNECE Regional Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs, etc. Climate Change commitments should also be included in these discussions.

6 Cross-Regional work is one of the less visible chapters of the UN work, despite it has been in the basis of relevant achievements, such as the 2007 UNGA resolution calling for a moratorium in the death penalty, written in cross-regional co-authorship “the purpose of which was to break the logic of regions acting as cohesive blocks” (Kissac, Robert, Breaking the Deadlock of Regional-Bloc Politics; Cross-Regional Coalitions and Human Rights in the UNGA, in Lombaerde, Philippe; Baert, Francis and Felício, Tânia [Eds.] “The United Nations and the Regions: Third World Report on Regional Integration”, Springer, New York, 2012, pp. 51-58).

provides channels for renewed cooperation. UN Special Representatives take advantage of cross-regional work possibilities many times.⁷

In the 2030 Agenda framework, cross-regional cooperation becomes more relevant than ever: its three levels of implementation scheme (national, regional and global) should not be understood as neglecting the relevance of other stages, like the sub-national and the cross-regional ones. In fact, cross-regional work takes place, for example an initiative that could be promoted as part of the SDGs' follow-up and review practices might be: Executive-Secretaries of the five UN RegComs meet to discuss regional perspectives, present its findings in a shared roundtable and, in the short term, they probably will publish a unified regional report as an input to the HLPF.⁸

Since the RegCom would continue meeting and working with Member States they could bring the progress trends, and consensus in each region to the cross-regional meetings, and this should be complemented with a summary of results of the operational activities of the AFPs gathered in each URCM. The idea here is to make the meetings very substantive and orient them towards enhancing the system capacities and the knowledge of Member States in their 2030 Agenda implementation. Regions could present a cross-regional report of efforts and progress towards the SDGs as an input to HLPF meetings.

"It is important to redraw the UN's regions so that they align much better. If we don't do that, it will be hard to strategize on a regional basis, and overlap and inefficiency will continue" (UN Staff representative, African region)

7 The SG Special Representative on Violence Against Children, for example, organizes an annual high-level cross-regional round table with regional organizations and institutions: "This forum has become a strategic mechanism within the United Nations to engage in policy dialogue, share knowledge and good practices, promote cross-fertilization of experiences, enhance synergies, identify trends and pressing challenges, and join forces to strengthen children's safety and protection." (retrieved from https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/cross_regional_roundtables).

8 The Inter-regional Expert Group Meeting "Placing equality at the center of the 2030 Agenda" (27-28 June 2018; Santiago de Chile) was a good example of cross-regional possibilities in support of the SDGs implementation. The gather was aimed at promoting equality as a key driver of the 2030 Agenda, debating on the findings of the "Promoting equality. An interregional perspective" report, built together by ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA as a cross-regional initiative (available at https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/promoting_equality_an_interregional_perspective_0.pdf).

4. Regional knowledge and capacities hub

Build a regional knowledge and capacities hub, in which all entities are able to join their resources to provide coherent support to Member States and other stakeholders.

A regional knowledge and capacities hub could have two main purposes. First, assuring experts to have a home (virtual and/or physical) in the different regions enabling the UNSDS to provide expertise and knowledge at the requests of Member States, made directly to the regional hub or through the RC system at the country level. These experts will also engage in transboundary issues, at both the regional and sub-regional levels.

Second, it enables different entities to have a more flexible setting and presence at the country or regional levels, allowing them to make meaningful savings that could improve their ability to deliver on the ground. This purpose should be seen in light of the management hub proposal in which the AFPs could get their operations support from the DCO at the regional level.

The analytical function is perhaps the most well-known of all the functions the UNSDS

has at the regional level, and it is highlighted regularly by different stakeholders. It covers the full knowledge cycle, including data collection, analysis and research through to policy advice. It requires technical experts with the ability to work both deep (on a particular theme) and wide (across different themes linking them together).

Regional entities lead the analysis of the regional level, while they complement national and global analysis, contributing both downwards (to help countries position their work within a regional context) and upwards (to support the analysis carried out in New York, Geneva and other global hubs).

Expertise exists in many of the UNSDS entities, but communication between them is currently quite weak and ad hoc. The UN system should thus have a stock of expertise to respond to requests made by Member States and the needs of stakeholders. These experts could

be based at the regional level to serve more efficiently to different countries and sub-regions. They should work hand in glove to offer analysis/advice, as well as deliver on the ground, when needed, regarding national and regional policies. It could be more cost-effective to have experts at the regional level than in every country. For example, a water expert's work could be more effective and efficient if placed at the regional level supporting several countries requests.

This regional knowledge and capacities hub could benefit from the virtual hub proposal by which all UNSDS entities and relevant non-UN stakeholders could upload their core capacities to be seen by all interested stakeholders in particular Member States and civil society.

This proposal is pointing a way forward towards a more modern UNSDS adjusting it to the already existing technological and virtual world and giving it options to adjust to current business operations goals such as the consolidation of 50% of UN offices into common premises by 2021, or common back offices by 2022. The flexible setting and presence of the AFPs at the national and regional levels could contribute to an improvement of their capacity to deliver on the ground in operational sustainable development activities and projects thus becoming, most probably more

reliable and efficient partners to work with by other stakeholders, including donors.

"The regional level is the perfect platform for knowledge sharing between regions"
(Member State, European region)

Selected thematic strategies

We do not propose a regional strategy. To develop regional strategies could be very difficult, considering different countries priorities and frameworks. Instead, creating agreed regional and sub-regional shared rules of procedures, and UN internal communications plans, could promote coordination and coherence. We are aware that the system is developing a Protocol of Country Engagement for secretariat entities and non-resident agencies. Our proposal could easily merge with this process that is already taking place at the UN.

Some interviewees thought that a coordinated UN strategy could cooperate in a more effective way with all relevant stakeholders (intergovernmental and civil society organizations) to present a common approach to be developed with the Member States' relevant institutions focusing their work in delivering concrete results to make the SDGs a reality at all levels (local, regional and national) within a State. Impact evaluation could concentrate on how the strategy (with programmes

and projects) really advances sustainable development in its three dimensions: social, economic and environmental.⁹

URCM should identify the most relevant transboundary issues that will allow the UNSDS to work together and deliver on SDGs implementation. Sub-regional strategies should work on cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, climate change, infrastructure, security, clean and affordable energy, water. Regional protocols of action and common rules of engagement to support SDGs implementation should be agreed on, to improve the way the UNSDS delivers at country and regional levels.

The UNSDS is comfortable with its clear mandate to convene Member States to discuss their strategic priorities for the first two functions (Analytical and Operational). This is a primary task of the Regional Commissions,

being suitable platforms for convening Member States to build regional consensus and common action plans that could move forward at the regional and sub-regional levels with positive insights for the countries programming and national plans. Furthermore, they could host sessions with the States to share best practices and lessons learned regarding their Voluntary National Reviews presented at the HLPF. The RegComs could use that valuable information with a more focused regional perspective to promote joint actions and peer learning that could advance the chances of each region to move faster in the implementation of 2030 Agenda.¹⁰

AFPs should use regions to become more flexible

Deployment at the national level should be made on temporary bases. When the job is done, UN AFP staff should revert to regional presence.

9 Here the UNDAF could make a special contribution. Many things – pros and cons – could be said about the UNDAF. Some critics made to UNDAFs by the UN Joint Inspection Unit in 2016 are still valid (Note: it refers to Un document JIU/REP/2016/6, "Meta-Evaluation and Synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework Evaluations, with a Particular Focus on Poverty Eradication"). Now that the system is reforming to better support countries in their implementation of the SDGs, the UNDAF should become a tool oriented for this purpose. Instead of covering all levels of the States' development and social policies, UNDAF should become a platform to align all stakeholders along specific projects related to SDGs, understood in an integrated and interrelated manner. The UNDAF as a platform could facilitate all UN levels (global, regional, sub-regional and country) to work together and offer support according to their capacities and expertise in relation to a pool of related SDGs (goals and targets) that need a joint approach to create impact and fulfil the purpose of "leaving no one behind".

10 To make it possible "Reports to the HLPF must be available much earlier. Only then can solid analyses be carried out and relevant national, regional and international actors coordinate and plan their input." (Marianne Beisheim, 2018, "UN Reforms for the 2030 Agenda. Are the HLPF's Working Methods and Practices 'Fit for Purpose'", SWP Research Paper 2018/RP 09, October 2018, page 21), and stakeholders engagement in VNRs building process should be strengthened towards a coordinated regional and national effort for creating enabling environments for its participation.

Flexible and temporary presence of all AFPs both at the country and regional levels depending on the projects being implemented on the ground could have an immediate effect on how the UNSDS works to deliver efficiently and in a coordinated manner. Aligning its work and joining forces with the new RC system at the country level will alleviate the burden for AFPs and will continue to allow them to work where there is a need. Likewise, aligning the coordination with the DCO at the regional hub and integrating it within the URCM will allow the regional AFPs presence to be flexible and concentrate their work in transboundary issues and other cooperation requirements from Member States. Shared platforms and management support could give all UNSDS entities a roadmap to deliver and implement on the ground, according to their core capacities and mandates.

“AFPs, based in countries, know difficulties and challenges better than RegComs” (CSO representative, Western Asia region)

“There is a huge gap between national and global actions. Regions could help to close it” (CSOs representative, Asia-Pacific region)

“Overlaps arise especially in the worst moments: during emergencies and crises” (UN Staff representative, Western Asia region)

Single UN Regional Analysis

While a single UN country analysis has been stipulated, there is still no similar document at the regional level. A single UN Regional Analysis would help unite the various UN entities and provide crucial input for the national (contributing to the UNDAF) and global levels. It could include sub-regional analysis as appropriate.

A single regional analysis would aim to enable countries to i) better understand potential areas for growth and improvement, and ii) identify bright spots and best practices so that countries can learn from, and support each other, as appropriate. “Peer-to-peer” opportunities are a top request from countries. The new agendas call for multisectoral transformative actions and policies, and countries want to know how others are already tackling specific challenges. In this context, the UN regional level can play an important brokering role, helping align actual in-country experiences with emerging national requirements in other countries across a region, and indeed, across regions.

Consolidated data, statistics, analysis and advice

Data is among the most important contributions of the regional UNSDS, uniting UN entities and building a bridge between them and non-UN stakeholders. Data gathering and analysis should be unified, with all relevant UN entities working together on specific themes. Crucially,

outputs (written and spoken advice) should be joined-up. Today, different parts of the UN might give different advice. Even if different approaches are taken in different parts of the UNSDS, advice should be shared with one voice, recognizing different points of view. Not in tension, but as part of a mature analysis. The UNSDS should aspire to "One Blue Report" (as one of our interviewees put it) on key regional issues.

"Sometimes, we don't know who is publishing what and when" (UN Staff representative, Western Asia region)

"ECLAC databases are regional and global public goods" (UN Staff, Latin America and the Caribbean region)

Mapping gaps

The hub should carry-out a mapping exercise, in partnership with States, to identify data gaps at regional or sub-regional levels.

Customised databases

The UN should acquire customized data base platforms that allow all entities to unify and centralize information in a coherent manner, including information requests to the system regarding countries, sub-regions and regions. Instead of each country needing to look all over to see which AFP could deliver on their priorities, the specific requests should be placed at the integrated website. This database should also integrate all reports on different SDGs, including lessons learned. The UN could develop a template for each SDG at the regional level.

5. Better funding incentives

Funding sources should be broadened, strengthened and better coordinated; incentives should be aligned.

Without a revision of how to make the UNSDS more effective and efficient at the regional and country levels, it could be difficult to assess the funding allocation, reallocation or increase, to make the system deliver according to the needs and requests of Member States.

However, we do know that the current threats to multilateralism would affect UN funding. Global economic constraints would also have effects on country contributions to the UN's regular budget in a short-term. Nevertheless, world economy roots behind current restrictions could also be seen as opportunities to create well-aligned funding incentives.

Nowadays, fund insufficiency is perceived by the five regions as a significant obstacle and as a primary reason behind competition between UN actors. There is broad regional consensus on the need for promoting core and pooled-funding instead of project funding.

Before setting strategies aiming at increasing the UNSDS funding sources, there should be a thorough evaluation about the way the system is working in relation to spending and allocating its budget. And also at what the impact made by funds in terms of Sustainable Development advance is.

To that end, UN budgeting could move towards a Result-based Budget (RBB), and give priority funding to projects, programmes and institutions that achieve better results at regional and national level. The RBB could also promote a more coordinated behaviour among UNSDS entities, by taking advantage of the existing competition for funding between them, and prioritising fund allocation to regional programs that involve more stakeholders working together under the regional UN system.

Reallocate savings to regional priorities

The regional level needs more investment of time and resources, not less. A message should be sent quickly that any savings made through greater efficiency will be reinvested at the regional level. This message would increase regional entities support to actual reforms on finance related issues, such as the Funding Compact or the change from biannual to annual UN budget exercises.

Include UNSDS regional specificities in new funding mechanisms

A step towards a demand driven business model and a more integrated response of the UNSDS entities was taken through the QCPR 2017-2020 (A/Res/71/243), the Funding Compact proposal (A/72/124, as set in the Final Draft of Funding Compact presented to UN Member States¹¹) and the new Management and Accountability Framework (as is set in the Preliminary Draft for Consultation on the Secretary General's Implementation Plan for the Inception of the Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System). The three initiatives integrate a unique vision on transparency, efficiency, accountability, and effective management practices at the UN, that include reporting.

Regarding the Funding Compact, its voluntary nature could be its primary strength if UNSDS

becomes more accountable, transparent, efficient and effective. To make it happen at the regional level, a concrete narrative on core and pooled-funding relevance should be developed and publicized, even through meetings between UNSDS representatives at the highest possible level and States

representatives. Expected DCO's reports on Funding Compact indicators tracking could include a regional chapter.

As a result of that narrative, Member States could be called to make medium and long-term voluntary pledges aimed specifically at supporting regional level UNSDS action. At the same time, RegComs and AFPs should commit to allocate a share of resources for joint activities, and to enhance its accountability and transparency, especially by publishing timely, harmonized and reliable data on funding flows. Publishing a single annual regional report on funding management, built under RegComs leadership and following Funding Compact UN commitments, could be a useful step.

Broaden sources of financing

An effective and efficient UNSDS entities work on the ground could to open the system to new sources of financing. URCM should do a mapping of regional donors, by region and thematic area of support, to increase the financing sources for transboundary and national projects.

11 A Funding Compact document will be presented for formal consideration by the ECOSOC in May 2019.

At the same time, UNSDS regional financial resources could be used to leverage national public resources in upper and middle-income countries, increasing country ownership. This would be a main source in low income countries and specific groups of countries such as SIDS and LDCs. The UNSDS regional level could also intensify its private sources funding. For that aim, besides transparency, accountability and impact-oriented information on resources allocation, funder visibility could, sometimes, be increased.

Prioritise UN staff

The UNSDS should instruct all entities, RegComs and AFPs, at all levels to abstain from hiring civil servants assigned to specific governmental offices. All staff hired by the system should deliver directly on 2030 Agenda, either through CT or regional activities in support of national SDGs' policies.

The proposal here is to concentrate the work of the UN in delivering on the SDG's and 2030 Agenda. Contracts around short-term government needs could result in an ineffective and inefficient implementation of resources.

6. Enhance Regional Sustainable Development Forums

The Regional Sustainable Development Forums should be enhanced and should be linked directly to the global HLPF.

The role of the Regional Sustainable Development Forums as a link between the processes of implementation of the SDGs at the national and global levels, granted by the 2030 Agenda, must be respected and facilitated.

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the States acknowledge that: "Regional and sub-regional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level" (paragraph 21), and within the framework of the SDGs establish that: "Follow-up and review at the regional and sub-regional levels can, as appropriate, provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets (...) Inclusive regional processes will draw on national-level reviews and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level, including at the high-level political forum on sustainable development." (paragraph 80).

However, on the one hand, the HLPF do not provide the regions with enough space and time to expose their work as a link between national and global processes, and on the other the regions have been able to turn the regional forums into spaces meant for the exchange and systematization of knowledge and experiences generated in the regions. To date, there is no unified report from the regions on experiences, progress and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. Such a document would be a critical contribution. Without it, the linkage between the national, regional and global levels for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs is hampered and possible synergies between them ends up getting lost.

Link between the national and the global

The regional sustainable development forums should receive information and be informed

by the experiences and knowledge of the Member States, becoming a space for the integration of knowledge and the identification of shared challenges. The solutions should be, necessarily or conveniently, implemented at cross-border scales. They are, in this sense, space for the promotion of regional cooperation and an opportunity to improve data coherence and interoperability across different UN regions.

Greater joint work between regional development forums can ease the identification and work at the transregional scale, as an intermediate space between the regional and the global.

At the same time, the regional forums are a privileged space to support the States in their processes of preparing voluntary national reports (VNRs), facilitating cooperation between those who have already made their presentations, and those who are going through the process for the first time. It is a perfect space to help them share experiences and take advantage of the knowledge obtained by the first ones that can be useful for the second ones.

Also, the forums are places in which countries can meet with the UNSDS at the regional level to jointly identify how changes in the global framework can facilitate or hinder the progress of the region and countries that integrate it, towards the achievement of the SDGs. Enabling a path that starts at the level of global analysis and ends at the national level.

Last but not least, Regional Sustainable Development Forums have a role to play in aligning and promoting complementarity in supporting the SDGs at the global, regional and national level at the statistical field. RegComs support Member States Statistical Groupings through regional forums which frame Member States priorities and develop regional strategies/roadmaps for statistical work, increasing statistical coherence across the system.

"We are normative organizations, with norms agreed at the global level" (UN Staff representative, Western-Asia region)

Link regional stakeholders

The regional forums should be a space for dialogue between different stakeholders interested in development with presence at the regional level. In other words, the Regional Forums should be regional multi-stakeholder forums for sustainable development.

Making the participation of other interested stakeholders possible, through the support for the creation of the human capacities that are required for an effective involvement in the work of the forums, should be promoted. Virtual courses aimed at stakeholders, that give them the tools for real participation, can be promoted from the regional level of the UNSDS. Obviously respecting the particular characteristics of each of the regional forums and their work rules.

The academy and think-tanks must play a fundamental role, since one of the missions of the regional forums is the systematization and transmission of national knowledge and experience. But the role of civil society in the construction of that knowledge and in its validation, of the private sector, parliaments and other stakeholders with responsibilities

in the implementation of the SDGs, is equally relevant. They provide visions and knowledge that complement the contributions of the States. For this reason, the forums should include in their programs substantive sessions of joint work between States and other stakeholders, including sub-regional and regional intergovernmental organizations.

7. Geo-streamlining

Streamlining regional maps and bringing more people together physically (cities and buildings) will help promote better collaboration.

Streamline the regional groupings

Geographical anomalies are inevitable in a huge organization– but they should be the exception rather than a rule. If UN entities are to work together at the regional and sub-regional level, they need to share the same regional maps. Today, many UN organizations work with different regional definitions. We recommend that all UN entities revise their structure to align with the five Regional Commissions. This is a fairly simple management exercise and should lead to benefits for the system.

The fact that some Member States are members of two Regional Commissions is a separate issue. One that is harder to resolve given that these are decisions for the States themselves rather than the UN Secretariat. Furthermore, it can be useful for one country to be a member of two Regional Commissions, if they choose so. We therefore do not recommend changes in this regard.

"It is important to redraw the UN's regions so that they align much better. If we don't do that, it will be hard to strategize on a regional basis, and overlap and inefficiency will continue" (UN Staff representative, African region)

Alignment with non-UN regional strategies
Sometimes, regional established development strategies become the first reference for involved countries. That is the case of the African Agenda 2063. Every action oriented to promote African countries development should be linked to that document, including the ones that seek to reach the SDGs.

"AU provides political leverage, ECA provides think-tank, African Dev Bank provides funding" (UN Staff representative, African region)

Consolidate country hubs

Working near each other physically does not necessarily lead to more dialogue, and in

today's world with advanced communication technologies the UNSDS should be able to modernize its methods of communication. Being far apart does make joint-working harder, but, there are significant efficiency savings to be made from sharing cities and buildings (in terms of travel, services, etc.).

We recommend that small and isolated offices should move to a regional or sub-regional hubs, in accordance with the regional requirements. It is important that sub-regional hubs exist as well, but not helpful to have isolated offices, except for special reasons.

Gradual co-location in same building (and other workplace “hacks”)

For those organizations, already in the same city, efforts should be made to co-locate in the same building, in order to reduce costs and enhance the possibility of dialogue. Barriers within buildings should be broken down (e.g. more open plan working, ensuring that people working on similar issues sit next to each other,

even (especially!) if they are from different UN entities). This conforms with the Secretary General's plan to halve the number of UN premises by 2021.¹²

Regional coordinators should be based in the region

Some regional coordinators are still based at headquarters. We could find no strong reason for this and recommend moving them to regional bases as soon as deemed appropriate.

The Europe region should have more scrutiny

Under the concept of “development” it was understandable that Europe has not been a UN priority. But sustainable development changes that. The problem of unsustainable development is located as much in Europe as any other region. The UN's presence in Europe should be stepped up and the same level of scrutiny should take place in Europe as elsewhere regarding progress towards achieving the SDGs.

¹² We are aware of the security risk of having too many UN staff in one place – that clearly needs to be taken into account.

MOVING FORWARD

Change is hard. Organizational change is harder. Aligning to the constant flow and transformation of the international system is even harder. Change should give us incentives to keep our structures and procedures as flexible as possible, and allow for an adequate and permanent adaptation to the outside world. This idea has been a cornerstone for our report, and that is why we have put forward these recommendations, inviting the UN system to have a broader vision that can inspire alignment to the changing environment.

But the reality is that ever since it came into existence, the United Nations has been constantly reforming itself. This is natural for an organization that needs to respond to a changing international system, and to Member States who are themselves going through transformations. In the last 70 years, we have seen a dynamic multilateral system with a huge increase in all types of international stakeholders operating in countries, sub-regions and regions, as well as on a global scale.

Today's challenge for the UN is to remain a predictable and efficient partner that delivers on the objectives of development, peace and security, set out in the UN Charter. Fragmented reform processes hardly contribute to the goal of strengthening the organization in terms of

coherence, transparency and accountability. In this context, our proposals to improve and develop the potential contribution of the UNSDS at the regional level contemplate the other parallel reform processes happening at the global and country levels. Once this process is finished, we believe the outcome should allow for a better alignment and collaboration of the UNSDS at all its levels.

Having several parallel reform processes happening at the same time is challenging, but it has also been an opportunity to concentrate our work around two key concepts: adaptability and flexibility. These concepts run through our recommendations giving them a long-term vision that will allow the UNSDS to prepare and adapt to constant change. Although our work has concentrated on the regional level, we believe this same spirit of flexibility and adaptability should be part of the guiding principles in all other UN action platforms, both at the global and country levels.

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are giving the UN the unique opportunity to transform its working methods, in order to bring countries together around the same objectives, with the possibility of designing integrated policies and strategies. The UN will certainly gain with a clear division of labour, and by everyone not trying to do the same thing, in the same

place, at the same time. Real specialization, with vision, is what is needed the most. Particularly now, when most countries around the world need support in order to implement the commitments not only on the 2030 Agenda, but also on Climate Change and other internationally and regionally agreed agendas. Swift reaction will determine the quality of life on the planet, and actual survival. This sense of urgency means that a reform process cannot be timid and should not be treated as another "business as usual" moment.

We believe the system could develop more effective and efficient procedures and structures to rebuild trust in the organization's capacity to deliver on the ground, with clear impact. The current funding procedures do not give incentives for cooperation and collaboration. However, the lack of impact and inadequate follow, plus the uncoordinated spread of UN entities in countries and regions around the world, make the UN less appealing to donors.

Beyond any doubt, the UN system, as a whole needs, to transform and not just reform. And for this to happen all entities need to take a hard look at themselves, and be willing to change. We are very aware of the difficulties and the challenges, but we also know the possibilities the UN system has to offer. But its complexity is indeed an issue that makes any transformation more difficult. This is not an impossible task. We believe that the UN can improve its methods

and culture, in order to become a coherent and effective partner to other stakeholders, and to help deliver and support the work of Member States in their commitments and actions on sustainable development.

The fact that the UN covers the whole world gives it a special place at all levels. The UN has extraordinary knowledge and resources with global reach. So, the potential for meaningful and long-lasting contributions is part of the UN's essence. The regional level is in a privileged position due to its capacity to better understand sub-regional and regional issues and dynamics.

All regions change, especially in this political reality of confrontation and different ideological and economic models manifesting themselves. It would be short sighted to allow the development work of the UN to disassociate from regional trends and intergovernmental work at the regional and sub-regional levels, because some stakeholders at the global or national levels believe that they do not serve their political interests and strategies.

The regional dimension adds to the scope of implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda and could highlight the challenges and consequences of unattended transboundary issues. It could also promote a culture of collaboration, information sharing and joint implementation of projects by Member States in their sub-region or region. The regional level could promote the engagement of all

relevant stakeholders around specific projects, programs or initiatives with regional or sub-regional impact.

A more strategic view of regions and sub-regions at the global level could enable UN regional presence to contribute to the understanding of political, economic, social and environmental challenges when designing and implementing policy with Member States. The regional level should be the eyes and ears of the Secretary-General, in order to understand and make decisions regarding regional challenges and UN action. This level should provide the 38th floor with timely assessment of situations and events happening in particular regions, allowing the UN leadership to take proper and rapid action when needed.

In the current international system, no country can be understood through a silo approach. More and more sub-regional and regional realities matter in the policies and strategies taken by governments. Transboundary issues are more relevant now than few years ago. Transboundary phenomena not only relate to one region; they can also have implications in many other regions.

Social, environmental, health, and other issues and challenges, give a special niche of work for the UN regional level and its ability to identify phenomena, connect the dots, and promote common strategies. It could have a powerful mobilization capacity if it reinvents itself into

something more than being a bridge between the global and the country levels. Dealing with common problems, threats and identifying viable opportunities to work together is absolutely relevant in the existing international system.

However, each region has its own characteristics and any attempt to promote a "one-size fits all" strategy is doomed. For a successful reform, or rather, transformation, all levels need to change and adapt. Our proposal also suggests that all UNSDS entities work and collaborate in accordance to their core capacities. They should try to do an even better job at what they regularly do, without overlaps and without entering into other entity's mandates. This could also help give clarity to a very complex system, that is difficult to read for any outsider, including even Member States.

Since this is a puzzle where all dots should connect and align, we believe that DESA, at the global level, should improve its analytical and norm setting capacities, and continue being the support of main UN organs and Member States at the global level. At the regional level, the Regional Commissions should strengthen their intergovernmental convening and natural focus in regional analysis and norm setting. The AFPs, both at regional and country levels, should improve their operational capacities, streamlining their activities to measure impact and deliver according to their core capacities. The additional political structures such as the

Resident Coordinator system with the DCO should integrate better to the UNSDS and find channels for collaboration, supporting each other's work including bringing common and consolidated solutions on issues such as management and administration.

Coherence, alignment, flexibility and adaptability should be the UN's motto if it wants to adjust to an international system that will leave the organization behind if it does not manage to transform itself. This urgency is the greatest opportunity for the UN. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals have given the UN the perfect framework to prove its ability to reinvent itself.



ANNEXES

Annex: Mapping of regional assets

For the inventory of the United Nations Development System regional assets we wanted to investigate two things: strengths & weaknesses, and personnel. To do this, we developed two specific research tools that were sent to the appointed UNDS regional focal points. First, a series of four tables to give us information about current personnel by location and seniority (quantitative) of the regional level; information about the main outputs and tools, and opinion about strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats of the UN regional entities.

Additionally, a survey with eight further questions was shared, giving the researchers more insight into each organization. The information garnered from these surveys was triangulated with copious interviews, meetings and literature/document reviews. Thus, our initial findings were tested and gradually honed. The mapping exercise was a key tool for the regional consultations.

DATA RECEIVED FROM*:

A data collection matrix was sent to 21 UN entities aiming to consult 172 regional offices; 24 UN entities sent information. A group of 146 offices (RegComs + AFPs) responded at least one variable on Budget or Human Resources.

RegComs (5)

ECA
ECE
ECLAC
ESCAP
ESCWA

AFPs (19)

FAO	WHO	UNHCR
IOM	UNOPS	UNESCO
UN Women	WFP	UN Habitat
UNFPA	UNODC	IFAD
UNAIDS	UNDP	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
ILO	UNICEF	OHCHR
UNEP		

For this exercise, the term office corresponds to work teams and/or physical presence where an UN entity works from.

The mapping of regional assets was based on information reported by UNDS Regional Structures, keeping in mind their distinctive features.

Sub-regional office refers to sub-regional and/or multi-country offices.

*Regarding the estimate of personnel, there is no specific measurement year, since some offices reported information for 2018 and / or 2019.

UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

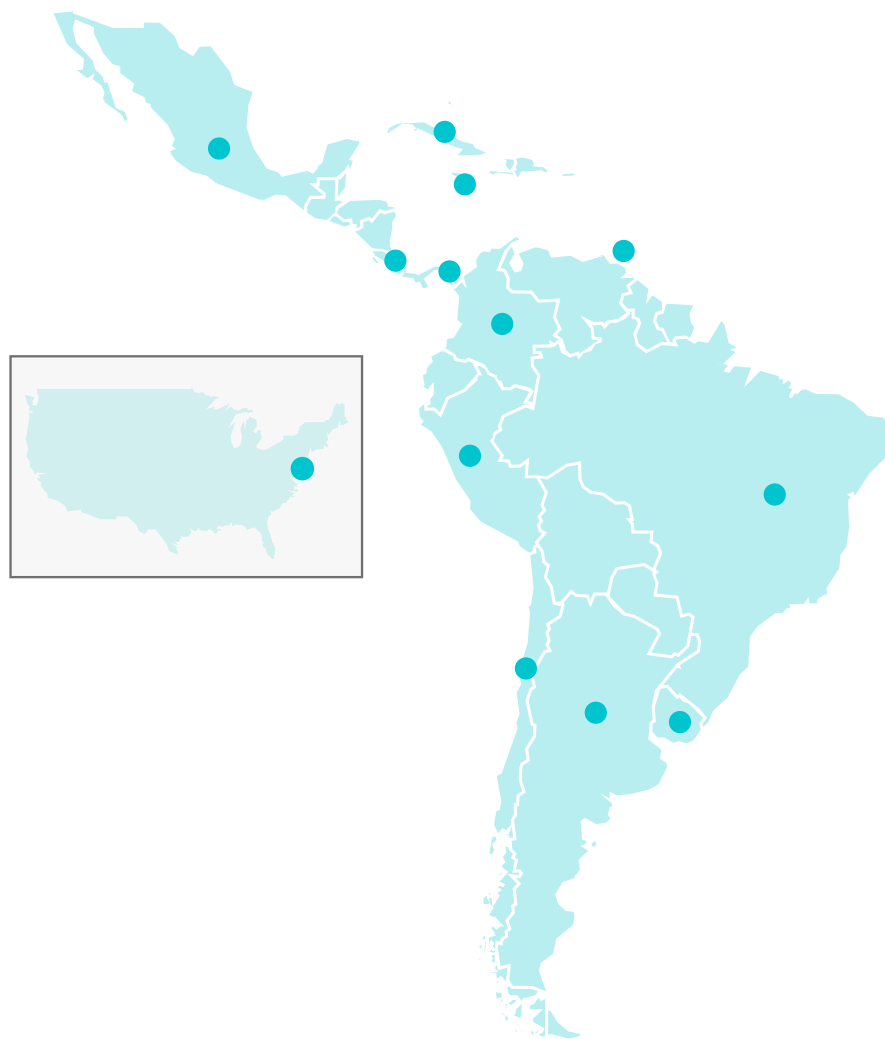
145 offices of the regional level (RegComs & AFPs) reported 7.863 permanent staff; 2.820 contractors located in 46 countries globally



*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

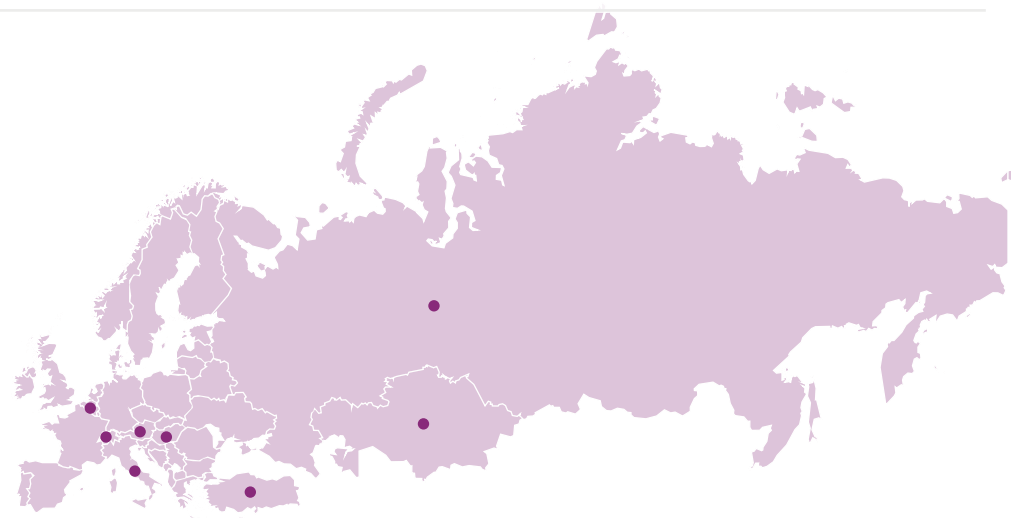


Country	Offices	Permanent	Professional Contractors
Argentina	2	27	2
Brazil	2	9	
Chile	4	501	178
Colombia	1	1	
Costa Rica	2	130	1
Cuba	1	11	1
Jamaica	1	3	
Mexico	3	82	98
Panama	7	426	159
Peru	2	98	
Switzerland	1	20	2
Trinidad and Tobago	2	66	
United States	3	26	
Uruguay	3	22	29
Total	34	1.422	470

*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

EUROPE

UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

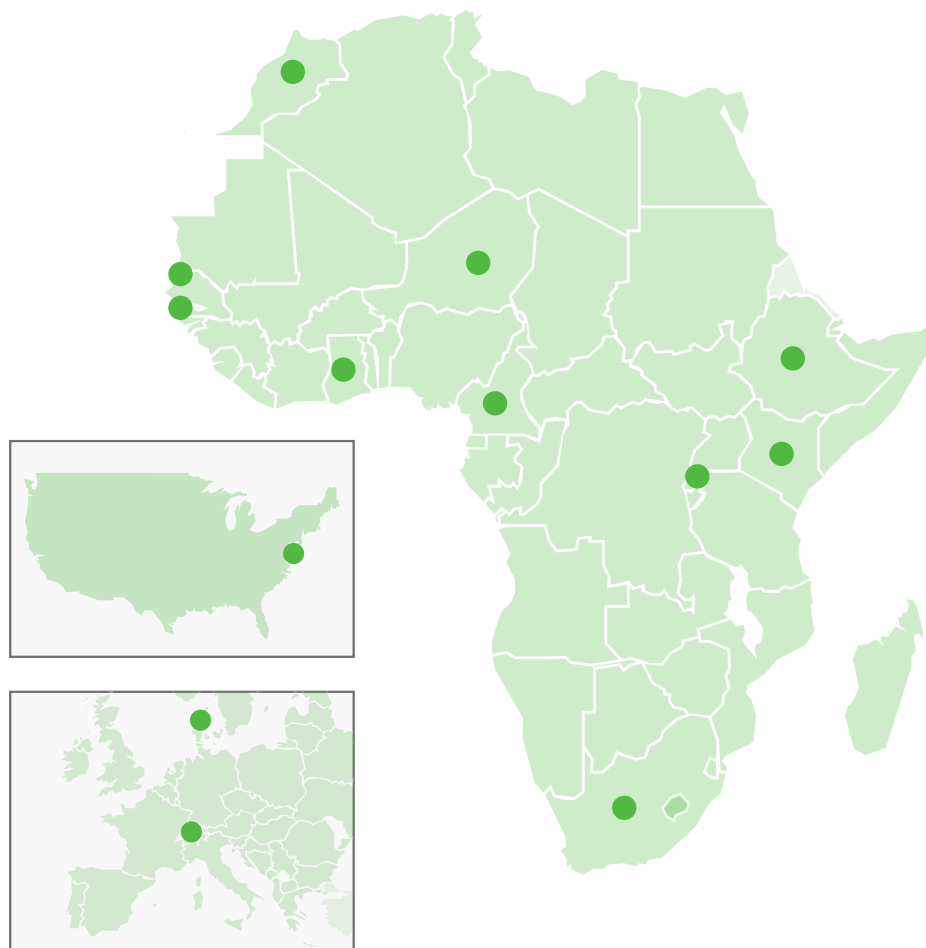


Country	Offices	Permanent	Professional Contractors
Austria	3	44	1
Belgium	2	81	10
Hungary	2	113	33
Italy	1	18	1
Kazakhstan	1	1	
Russian Federation	3	65	
Switzerland	4	265	332
Turkey	2	43	39
United States	2	26	2
Total	20	656	418

*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the European region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

AFRICA

UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

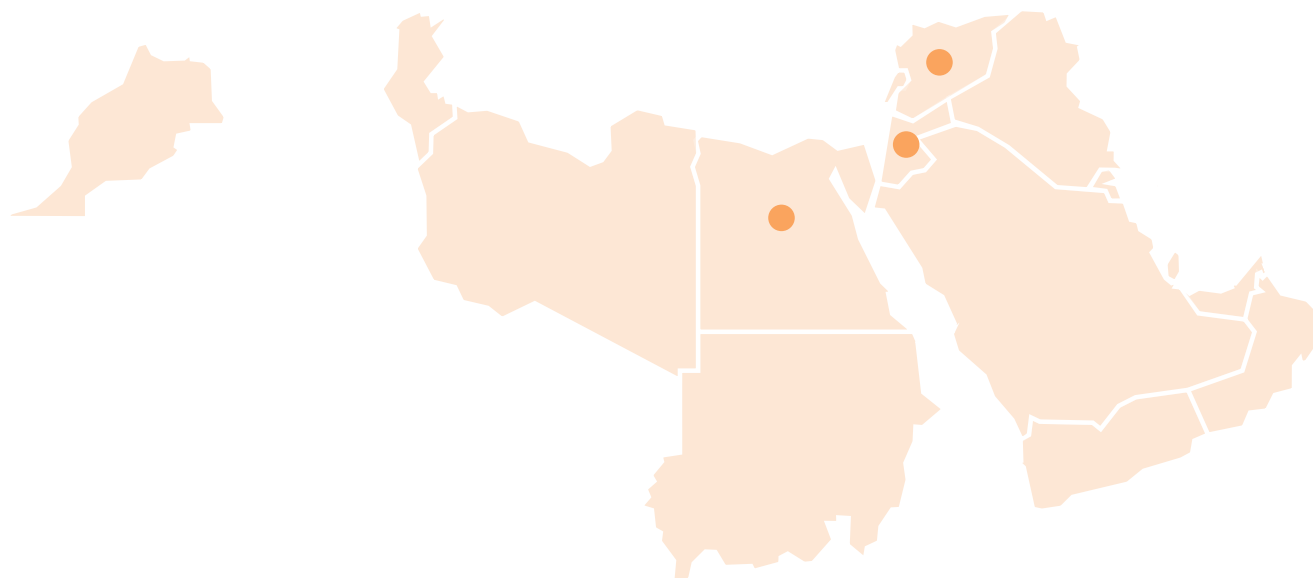
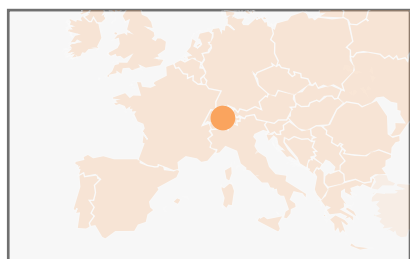
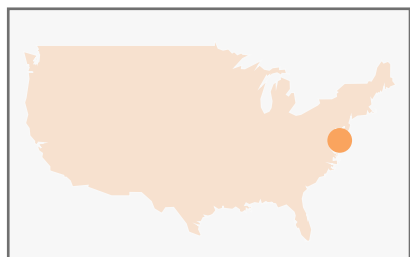


Country	Offices	Permanent	Professional Contractors
Cameroon	1	20	
Denmark	1	7	
Ethiopia	3	670	214
Gambia	1	19	
Ghana	1	154	188
Kenya	8	417	74
Morocco	1	18	
Niger	1	17	25
Rwanda	1	18	
Senegal	8	392	44
South Africa	5	219	10
Switzerland	2	65	
United States	1	30	1
Total	34	2.046	556

*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the African region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

WEST ASIA

UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

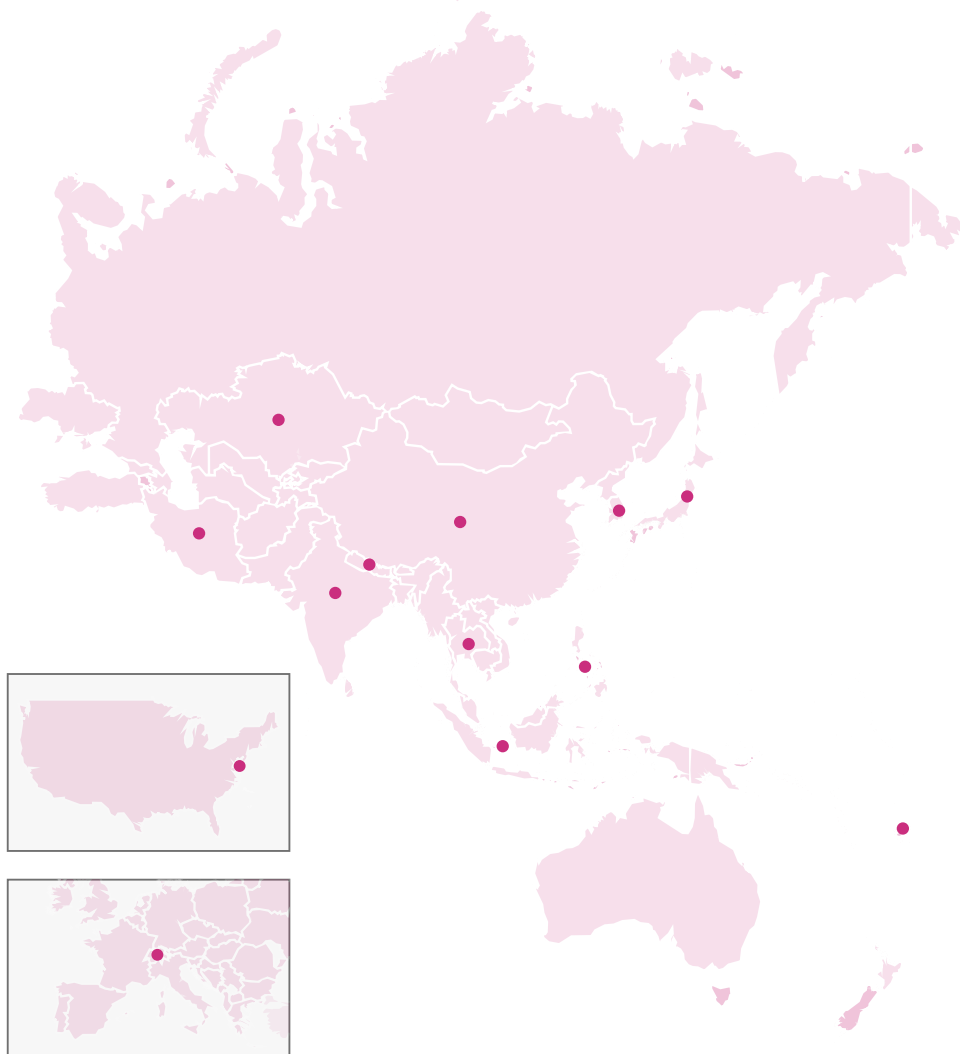


Country	Offices	Permanent	Professional Contractors
Egypt	10	920	183
Jordan	5	234	28
Lebanon	3	353	84
Switzerland	1	39	3
United States	1	4	
Total general	20	1550	298

*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the Western Asia region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

ASIA PACIFIC


UNDS REGIONAL STRUCTURES

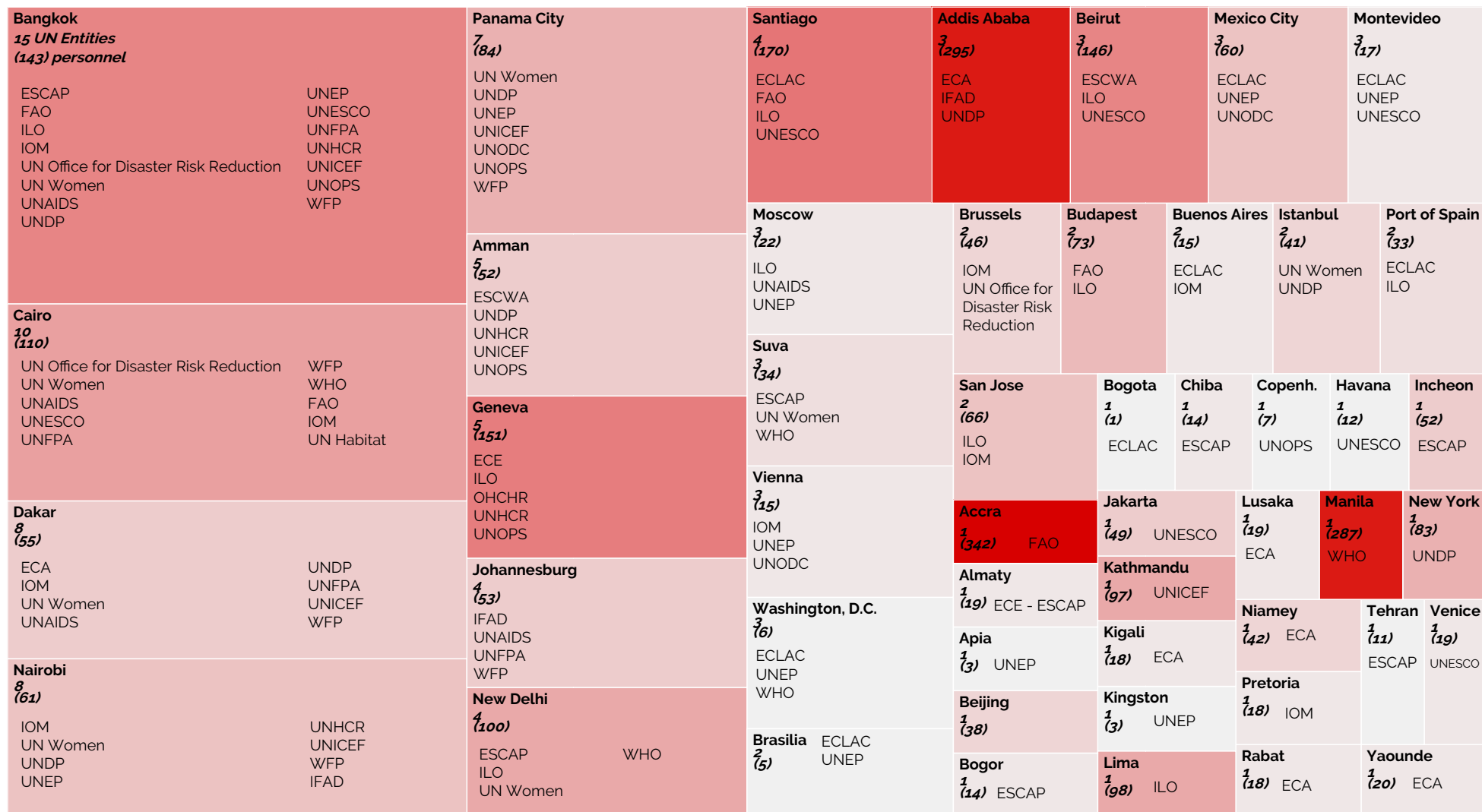


Country	Offices	Permanent	Professional Contractors
China	1	11	27
Fiji	3	71	30
India	5	348	50
Indonesia	2	25	38
Iran	1	5	6
Japan	1	10	4
Kazakhstan	1	9	9
Nepal	1	70	27
Philippines	1	287	
Republic of Korea	2	23	29
Samoa	1	3	
Switzerland	1	28	
Thailand	16	1286	858
United States	1	13	
Total	37	2.189	1.078

*The information reported in this map shows permanent staff and contractors that work at the regional level, but are not necessarily physically placed in the Asia Pacific region. Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

UNDS Regional Structure – density of physical presence

Proportion (1)  (342)



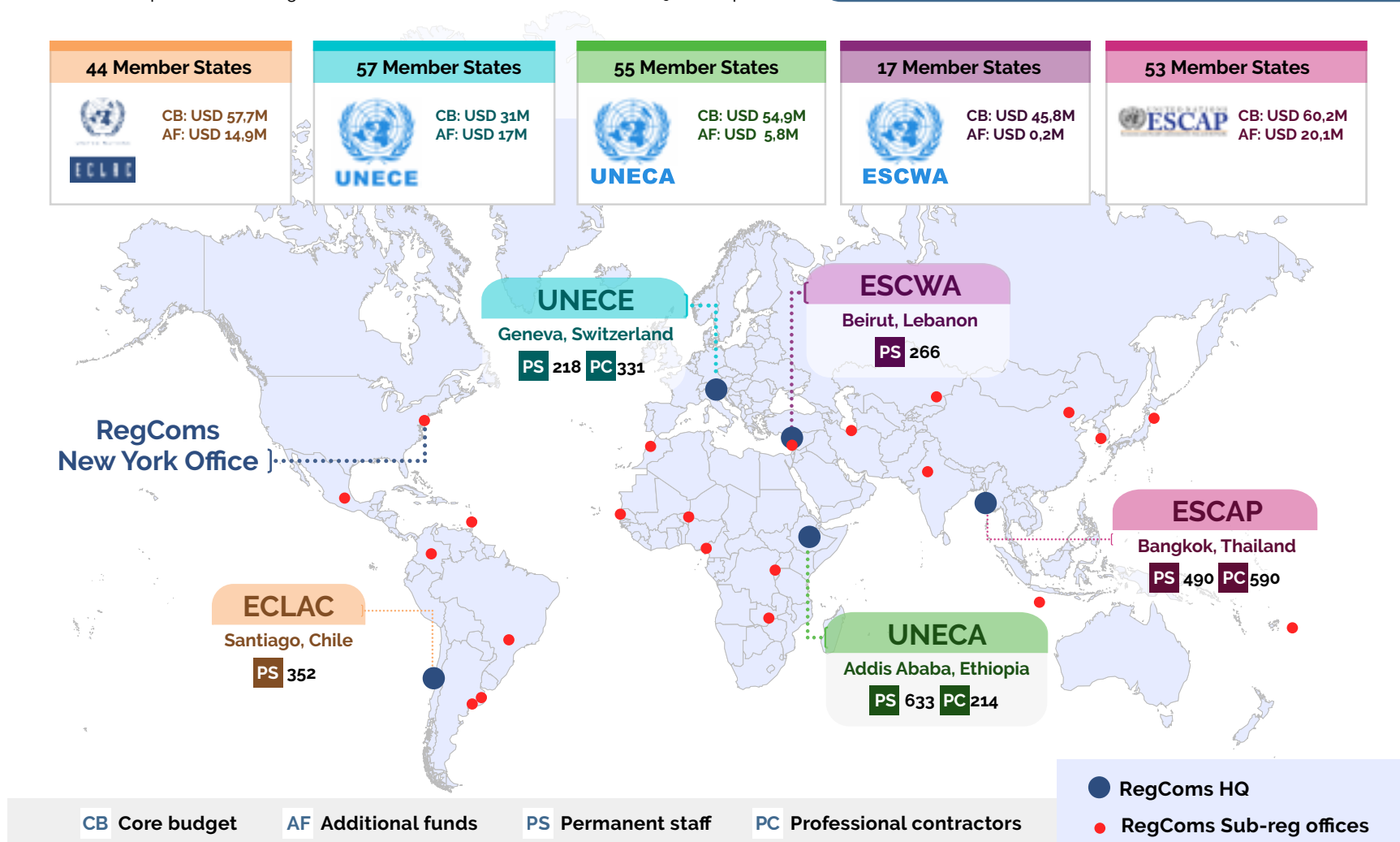
This graph shows the relationship between the number of UN entities per city, as well as the proportion of personnel (permanent staff and professional contractors) by entity in each city. The size of each rectangle is proportional to the number of entities per city. The color indicates the proportion of the staff (permanent staff and professional contractors) by entity. Light tones indicate lower concentration of personnel per entity in a city.

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

*The map shows results according to information reported by 30 offices distributed as follows: ECA (7), ECE (2), ECLAC (8), ESCAP (11) and ESCWA (2). Some offices registered technology transmission centers.

The values reported for the budget and additional funds include data for 2018, 2019 or both periods

5 RegComs and 30 sub-regional offices* reported 2.278 permanent staff and 1.256 profesional contractors. They also reported an annual overall core budget of USD 249,8 million and additional funds of 58,2 million

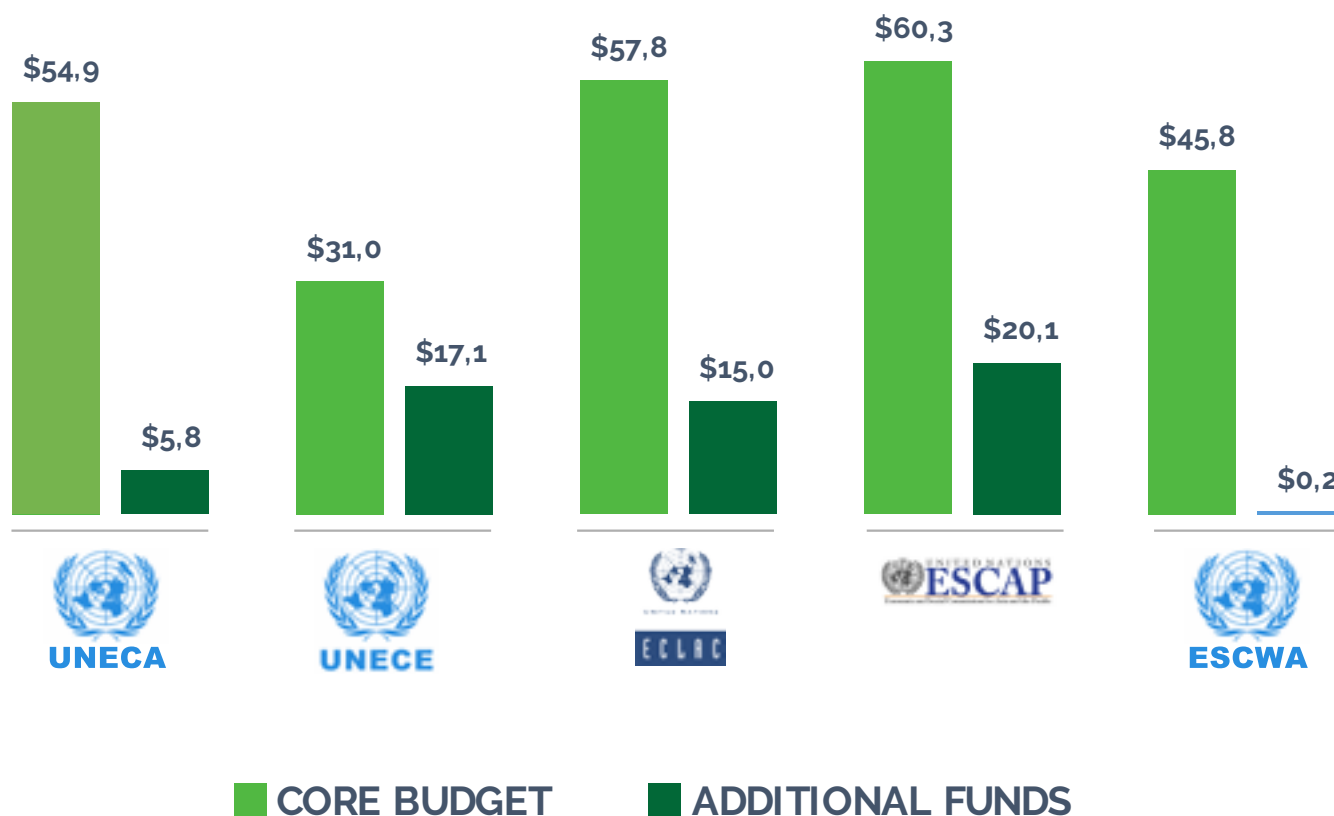


*Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

Regional Commissions Total Budget (Millions of Dollars)

The ESCAP budget represents 26% of the total budget for RECs. Likewise ECLAC and UNECA have the 24% and 20% of the total Budget respectively.

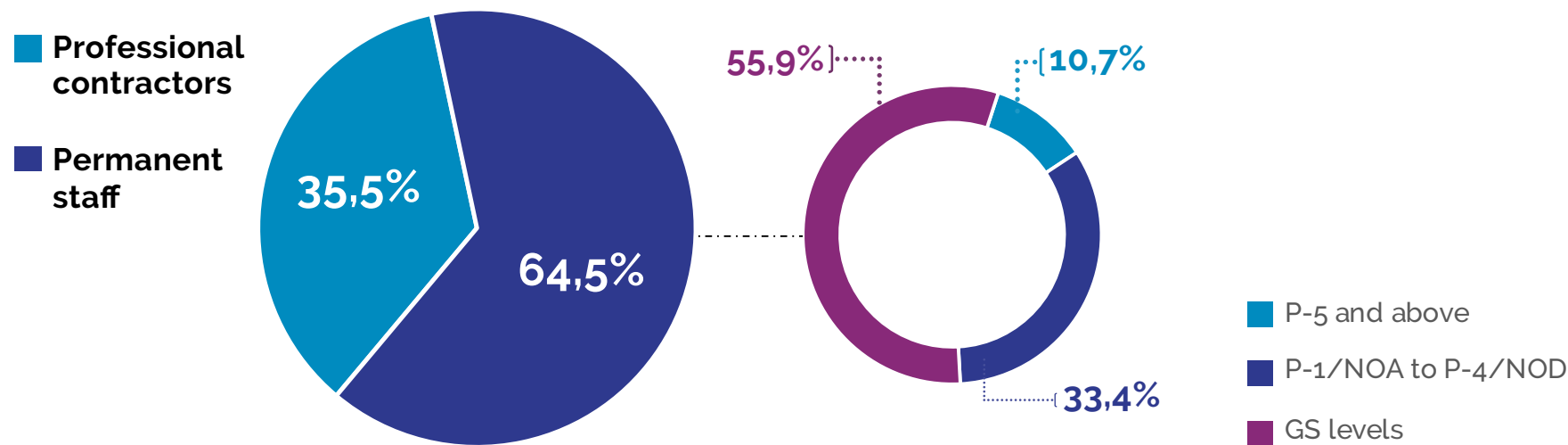
In all cases Core Budget is the largest budget



Regional Commissions personnel distribution by type of contract*

The graphic shows results about human resources at the RegComs according to the information provided by its 30 offices.

64.5% of the personnel in the RegComs, are permanent staff.
55.9% belongs to GS levels, whereas 10.7% belongs to P-5 level and above.



Staff Categories

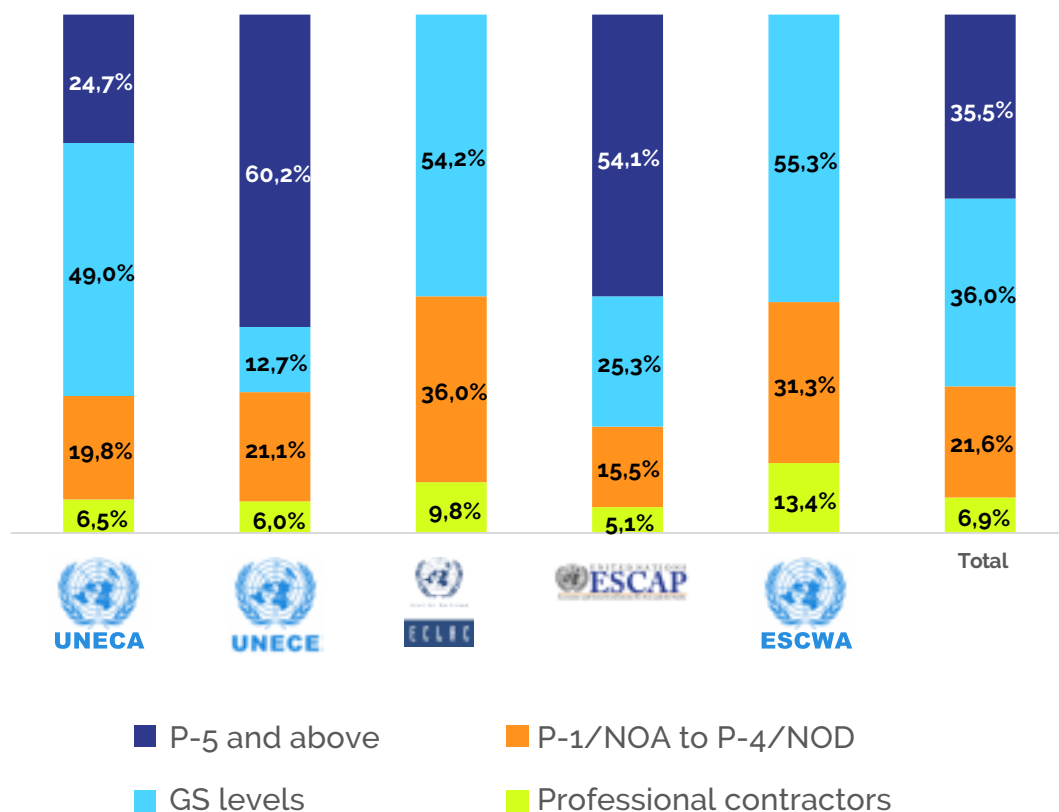
P-1: One year of relevant professional work experience
P-2: minimum 2 years of work experience
P-3: minimum 5 years of work experience
P-4: minimum 7 years of work experience

P-5: minimum 10 years of work experience
P-6/D-1: minimum 15 years of work experience
P-7/D-2: more than 15 years of work experience
GS: General Services

*Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

Regional Commissions

Personnel distribution by level



The graphic shows results about human resources according to the information reported by 30 RegComs offices distributed as follows: ECA (2), ECE (7), ECLAC (8), ESCAP (11) y ESCWA (2).

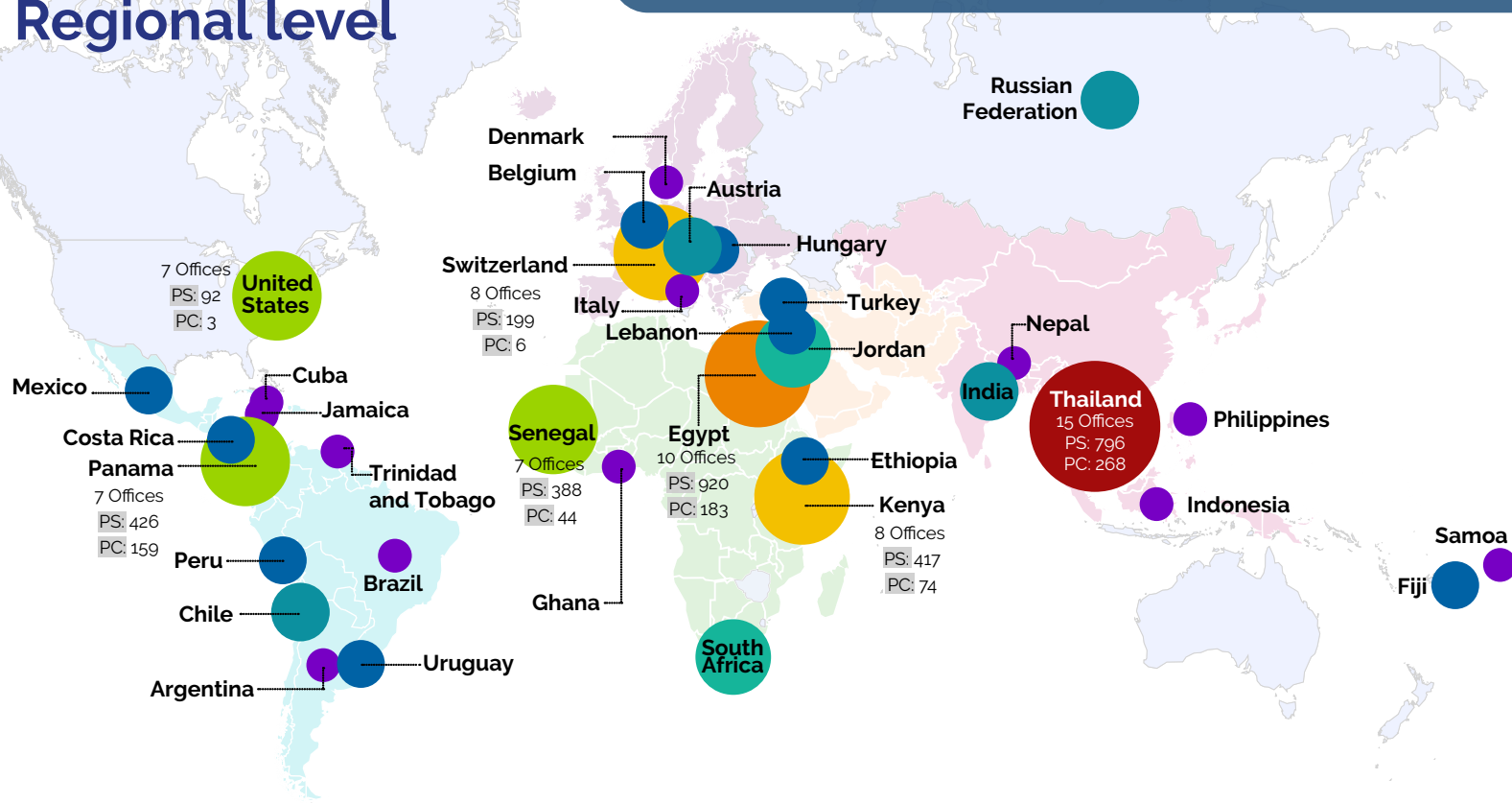
* The majority of the staff of the 5 RegComs concentrates on the GS levels (36%). ECLAC and ESCWA are the RegComs with the largest staff in GS levels. They do not have contractors, and they have the highest percentage of professionals.

* On the other hand, UNECE and ESCAP are the RegComs with greater participation of professional contractors. In general, the managerial level (P-5 and above) in RegComs is low: 6.9%, compared to professional contractors and GS levels that are distributed in equal proportion.

AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

(AFPs) Regional level

115 AFPs regional offices* reported 5.585 permanent staff and 1.564 professional contractors. They also reported an anual core budget of 718 USD million and additional funds of 552 USD million.

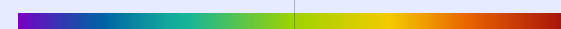


*For this exercise, the term office corresponds to work teams and/or physical presence where an UN entity works from. *Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

OF Offices **PS** Permanent staff **PC** Professional contractors

A distinction was made between regional bureaux and regional hubs, because of their differing physical regional presence.

Offices

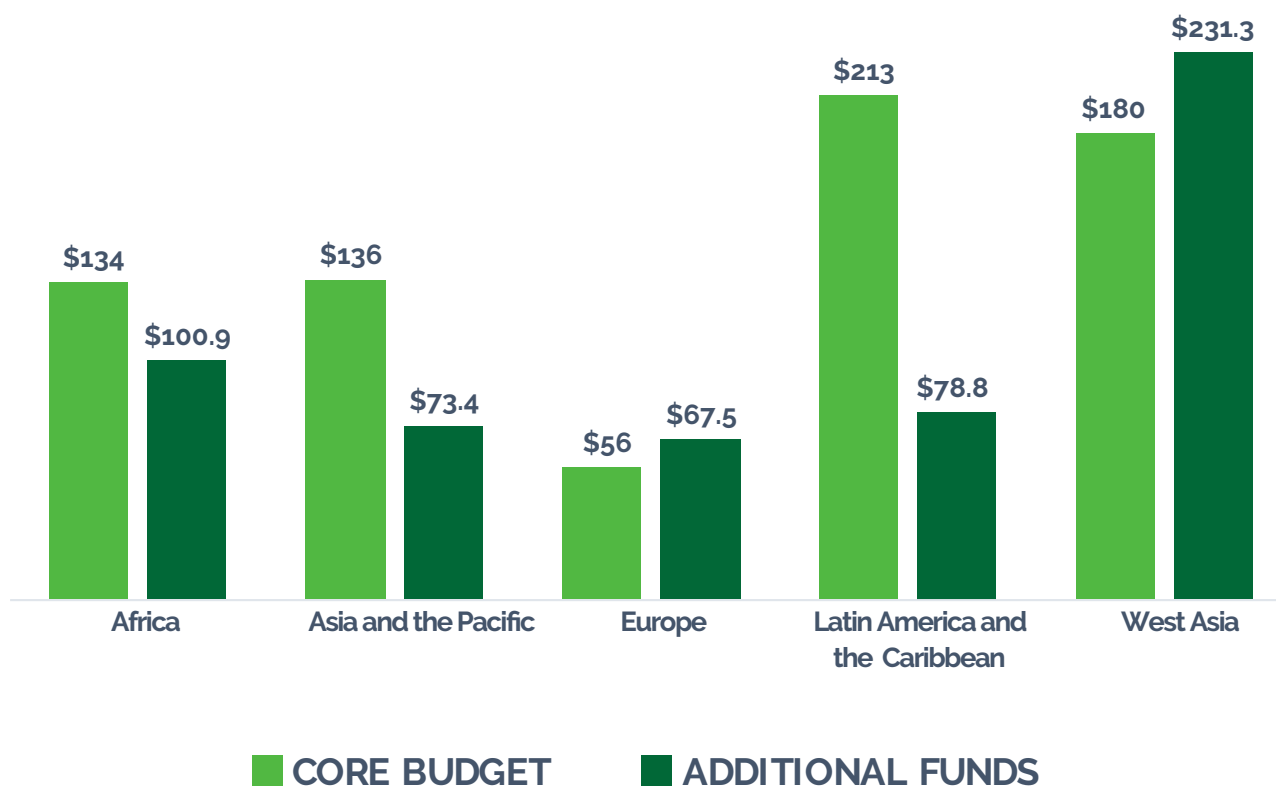


AFPs regional Total Budget (Millions of Dollars)

The graphic shows the budget allocation for AFP in each region. For this exercise we took as part of the core budget the total financing received by PAHO from WHO.

Asian and the Pacific concentrate approximately 39% estimated budget, followed by Africa.

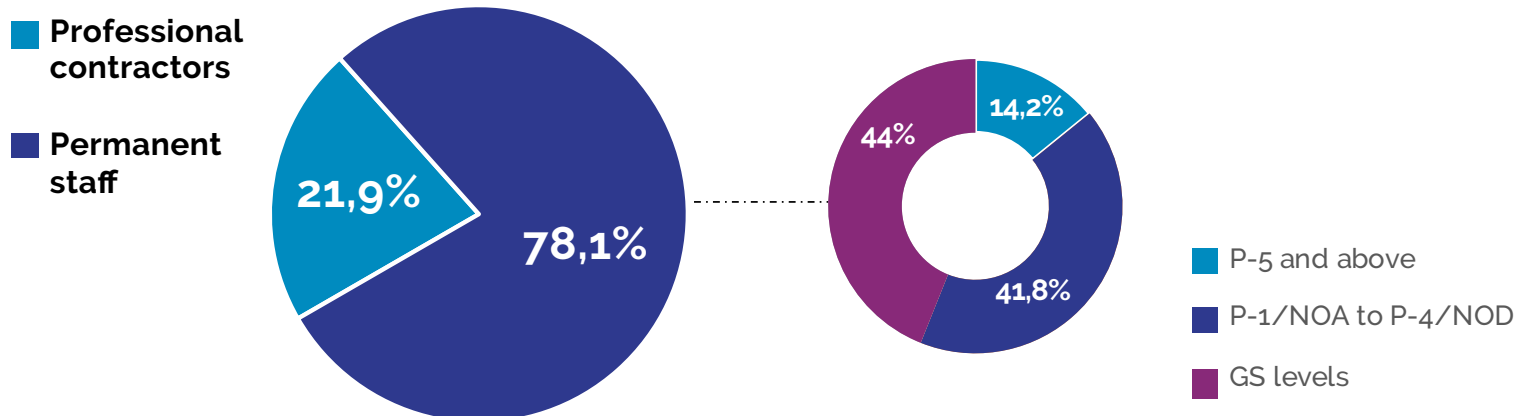
Additional funds represents the largest budget for Asia and the Pacific, Europe and LAC.



AFPs regional personnel distribution by type of contract

The graphic shows results on human resources according to information reported by 115 AFPs regional offices, out of 116 that responded to the exercise.

78,3% of the personnel in the AFPs are permanent staff, and within this 78,3%, there is almost an equal distribution between GS and P-1 to P-4 levels.



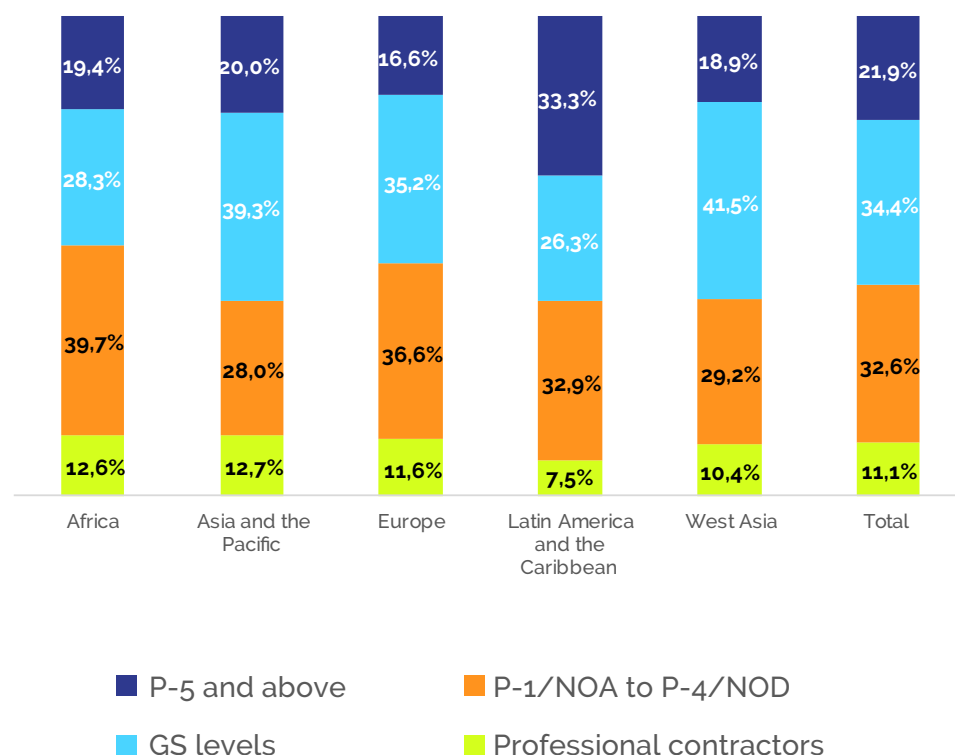
Staff Categories

P-1: One year of relevant professional work experience
P-2: minimum 2 years of work experience
P-3: minimum 5 years of work experience
P-4: minimum 7 years of work experience

P-5: minimum 10 years of work experience
P-6/D-1: minimum 15 years of work experience
P-7/D-2: more than 15 years of work experience
GS: General Services

*Permanent Staff is defined as Professional and GS Level Staff.

AFPs regional personnel distribution by level and region



The graphic shows results on human resources according to information reported by 115 AFPs regional offices distributed as follows: Africa (27), Asia and the Pacific (26), Europe (18), Latin America and the Caribbean (26) and West Asia (18).

At a general level, the majority of AFPs staff is concentrated in GS levels (34.4%).

In terms of regions, West Asia and Asia Pacific have the highest participation of collaborators in the GS levels, while Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest number of professional contractors.

In general, regional AFPs have a balanced distribution among professionals P-1 to P-4, and GS levels.

Annex: Core research team

Philipp Schönrock

**Director
Cepei**



Director of Cepei, an independent think-tank he founded in 2003. During the last 16 years he has provided policy solutions and insights in critical strategic areas so as to optimize the engagement on: governance, finance and data for sustainable development. He has been part of numerous initiatives: he was co-chair of Beyond 2015, and currently serves as board member of Together 2030 and of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. He is also a member of the Technical Advisory Group of the Global Partnership on Sustainable Development Data, the Programme Committee of the UN World Data Forum, and the SDSN Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics (SDSN TReNDS). In 2018, he was a visiting fellow at the German Institute for International Security and Affairs (SWP).

Patti Londoño

**Senior Policy Advisor
Cepei**



Former Colombian diplomat and former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. She is a political scientist from the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, with a Masters in international relations from the University of Stockholm and a Ph.D. from the UNED University in Madrid, Spain. Ms. Londoño was a professor and researcher at the Finance, Government and International Relations Faculty of the Universidad Externado de Colombia. She has co-authored books on the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries with former Foreign Minister Luis Fernando Jaramillo, and has published several academic documents on multilateral relations.

Jonathan Glennie

**Research Fellow
Cepei**



Writer, researcher, consultant and practitioner on international poverty and human rights. Until recently, he was Director of the Ipsos Sustainable Development Research Centre and previously he was Director of Policy and Research at Save the Children UK, Country Director of Christian Aid in Colombia, and Senior Research Fellow at ODI, leading research and policy advice on the future of development cooperation. He has published a well-received book on aid and was a regular columnist for The Guardian's Global Development website.

Javier Surasky

**Governance for Sustainable Development
Coordinator Cepei**



Cepei's Governance for Sustainable Development Research Area Coordinator and Chair of the International Cooperation Department at Institute of International Relations of La Plata National University in Argentina. He is a senior researcher primarily oriented to Development Studies, particularly in the fields of South-South Cooperation and the 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up processes.

Juanita Olarte

Team Coordinator
Cepei



Senior researcher and practitioner in the areas of international development and cooperation. For the last 10 years, she worked in the Colombian International Cooperation Agency, where she closely followed the Colombian admission process to the OECD, and the negotiation of the sustainable development agenda. At the Cooperation Agency, she has been the Chief of Staff of the General Director and the Director of South-South and Triangular Cooperation. She studied international relations (Universidad del Rosario) and has a Master's Degree in strategic diplomacy and negotiation (Paris University).

Carolina Vegas

Editor
Cepei



Writer, editor and journalist. She studied Social Communication at Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá and has a Master's Degree in Literature with emphasis in Gender Studies from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico. She has been an editor at Semana Magazine and also editor in chief and director of Semana Jr. magazine. As a consultant, she has worked with Human Rights NGO Women's Link Worldwide. She is a published author of two novels. As a journalist, she has published her work in various national and international media outlets.

Support team

Fredy Rodríguez

Data Coordinator
Cepei



Professional in administration from the University of Wales in the United Kingdom, with an MBA from the Externado de Colombia University. Experience in project management with supranational organizations for the construction of standards, guidelines, identification of good practices and organizational analysis in the production of statistics. He was Coordinator of Statistical Regulation in the National Administrative Statistics Department of Colombia (DANE). He is the Data Coordinator at Cepei, where he leads several projects on Big Data, open data (www.datarepública.org), data culture and impact on SDGs from the private sector.

Margarita Vaca

Data Researcher
Cepei



Economist specialized in Applied Statistics and technical studies in business logistics and project management. Experience in statistical and econometric analysis, preparation of technical reports and formulation of indicators. Researcher of the Data Area of Cepei.

Jaime Gallego

Data Researcher
Cepei



Environmental administrator with a postgraduate degree in environmental engineering and experience as a consultant in environmental economics, economic valuation of environmental services. He has worked as a project coordinator in the area of environmental economic evaluation for intervention projects, associated with infrastructure, mining, hydrocarbon exploitation, among others.

Juan Vega

Data Assistant
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Economy student of last semester with emphasis on quantitative methods. He has worked as an academic monitor in the areas of microeconomics, international economics and experimental economics at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana of Bogota. Works in the collection and analysis of data sets and evidence-based story building.

Alexandra Roldán

Communications Coordinator
Cepei



Social Communicator, with emphasis on editorial production, from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, with an MA in Political Studies from the same university. Specialized in coordinating Sustainable Development communication and advocacy activities in partnership with civil society organizations, governments, academic institutions, data communities, and private sector.

Alba Pabón

Graphic Designer
Cepei



Graphic designer from the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Bogota, with experience in corporate image development, editorial design and development of digital and printed promotional pieces. She has recently worked as a graphic and digital designer for data query and visualization systems of the National Statistical System in Dane.

Kevin Amaya

Communications Assistant
Cepei



He is currently a systems engineering student at the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Bogotá. With knowledge in programming languages such as Java, Matlab or PHP. At Cepei, he works as an assistant in the Communications area, performing data collection tasks for databases, managing archives, documents and historical records of the organization. Also, he supports the administration and content update of the website.

Emily Tedards

Researcher, TReNDS
SDSN



Researcher and recent graduate from the London School of Economics, where she earned an MSc specialized in international law and legal theory. Prior to that, she studied Politics, Human Rights, and Development at New York University. She currently researches policy innovation, information management, and political competitiveness.

Annex: Experts Panel

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Secretary General
German Council for Sustainable Development

Shaida Badiie

Managing Director
Open Data Watch

Max-Otto Baumann

Senior Researcher
German Development Institute (DIE)

Arelys Bellorini

United Nations Representative
World Vision International

Paula Caballero

Managing Director, Climate & Water
RARE

Stephen Chacha

Founder
Africa Philanthropic Foundation

Ricardo Corredor

Chair
Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)

Jessica Espey

Director
SDSN Trends Network

Roberto García López

Executive secretary CoPLAC-GpRD
Interamerican Development Bank (IADB)

Raúl García Rodríguez

Director
Bogaris Group, Retail and Industrial Property
Development Holding

Andrew Griffiths

Head of Advocacy
Sightsavers

Claire Melamed

Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Sustainable
Development Data (GPSDD)

Wasim Mir

Senior Fellow
UN Foundation

Namhla Mniki Mangaliso

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African Monitor

Andrea Ostheimer

Executive Director NYO
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Hannah Ryder

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Executive Director for Policy
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Silke Weinlich

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About Cepei

Cepei is an independent, non-profit, data driven think-tank, working through field based analysis, research projects and high-level advocacy to scale up and support the development community, to make a meaningful and sustained contribution to Sustainable Development.

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