

ECOSOC Dialogue on longer-term positioning of UN development system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Interlinkages in the UN development system¹

I. Introduction: An Interconnected Agenda

The 2030 Agenda presents a universal comprehensive and interlinked set of goals that define what we, the people of this planet, need to accomplish by the year 2030 to build a sustainable world that leaves no one behind. The Agenda enjoins actors at every level, local, national, regional and global, to work together across their divides in global, regional and country contexts. The 2030 Agenda goes far beyond the imperatives of economic growth and moves into the necessary policy integration of the economic, social and environmental dimension of sustainable development. It links development to sustainability and recognises that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the concept of development. The 2030 Agenda also envisions a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice and equality without discrimination, and also a world where increasingly inter-dependent economies are people-centered dynamic, sustainable and innovative, promoting inclusive growth and reduction of inequalities, women's economic empowerment, youth employment and decent work for all. It is a world that must integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental, and where the requirements of nature as well as of human beings are recognized.

The Sustainable Development Agenda demands fundamental changes in how we produce and consume goods and services, how we manage our planet's natural resources, emphasizing the urgency of pursuing sustainable development. Such an interlinked and indivisible agenda demands mutually reinforcing and synchronized efforts in all dimensions and by all actors of sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda therefore requires consideration and active mobilization of a multitude of interlinkages. In addressing these interlinkages, the UN must reverse the trends of excessive bilateralization and fragmentation in the global development landscape and revitalize multilateral approaches and institutions by taking steps, which make them more effective. The Agenda provides a new rationale for an inclusive and UN-led multilateralism, taking into account that global sustainable development is an investment in all dimensions of peace and social cohesion. To deliver its multilateral functions in the rapidly changing global context, the UN's collective action capacities must be significantly enhanced. It needs to turn outwards and foster multilateral linkages. It must be able to bring goals, strategies, actors and resources together. It must lead and broker partnerships, convene, mobilize and leverage actors, facilitate the resolution of global policy conflicts, hold stakeholders accountable, ensure its legitimacy and credibility, develop commonly agreed norms and provide thought leadership. It is a major task.

The fundamental shift in the global development landscape calls for an equally fundamental repositioning of the UN development system (UNDS). Marginal change is not an option; the silo structure must be

¹ This paper has been conceived as an expression of the underlying interlinkages that lead to the recommendations that have been submitted in previous presentations of ITA and discussed in past workshops. There are various references to them as they relate to the need to reinforce these interlinkages in an integrated UNDS system, but it is not the intention to suggest a detailed discussion of them at this stage. The ITA analysis of Findings and Conclusions will contain an overall appraisal of the logic, interdependence and holistic approach of the key recommendations together with an effort to respond to the main questions raised in the workshops.

overcome. In order to assume the new responsibilities, the UNDS ought to function as one coherent whole that embodies the principle of cohesion in diversity. System-wide cohesion requires filling the horizontal leadership gaps in the system, while maintaining diversity of competencies at the headquarters, regional and national levels, reflected in the range of UNDS entities. Well-managed diversity can exploit the benefits of specialization with integrated actions. It is a source of strength and richness. In contrast, fragmentation leads both to duplication and the failure to take advantage of opportunities for cooperation. As such, it is costly, burdensome and a source of weakness. Incentives for cooperation need to be strengthened and competition needs to be reduced. The 2030 Agenda gives Member States the opportunity to take the necessary decisions and place greater trust in such a truly multilateral, efficient and effective UNDS and fund it with appropriate levels of core-contributions and other resources.

II. External linkages: The UN as the epitome of multilateral development cooperation

a. Interlinkages inherent in the 2030 Agenda and its universality

The 2030 Agenda generates obligations for all Member States. It creates a universal responsibility for every Member State to engage in the implementation of the SDGs, domestically, regionally and globally, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities. Addressing the severity of this global challenge requires collective actions, rebalancing the needs of people, their prosperity and the safety of the planet. It demands a UN system that promotes cohesion in diversity and catalyses interlinked efforts at all levels and in all spheres. The UN's universality, its legitimacy as a multi-lateral convenor, and its acknowledged expertise in specific areas, makes its development system the natural choice for harnessing the interlinkages that underpin sustainable development. The SDGs are interlinked and indivisible, calling for an equally integrated approach to implementation. Shining a light on the interlinkages and providing coherence is the new challenge for the UNDS, both in terms of knowledge and also in terms of managing the politics of development efforts. The UNDS has a crucial role to play in identifying these trade-offs and externalities, raising awareness, and facilitating multilateral processes for resolving conflicts of interests in various contexts.

The principle of universality highlights the evolution from a UNDS centered on the needs of developing countries, which must continue as a priority, to one that also addresses the needs of global sustainable development. It also suggests the need for, and the consequences of, having UNDS engagement in all country contexts, including in developed countries. This might, for example, serve to improve the UNDS monitoring and advocacy function and help the facilitation and brokering of North-South, South-North, North-North as well as South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development.

b. Interlinkages with development partners

In a diverse and fragmented development landscape, the potential contribution of the UNDS must be seen as lying foremost in its ability to motivate and coordinate development actors within and beyond the UNDS itself so as to make the best use of the available human, financial and institutional resources. Cohesion in diversity provides a new perspective for the interlinkages between the UNDS and civil society organizations, private businesses, and other partners. Interlinkages with the Bretton Wood Institutions (BWI) and other International Financial Institutions are essential for an effective multilateral development system. This is also echoed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) for financing sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda as, decided by the UN General Assembly (UN-GA), is valid and applicable to all development organizations. Consequently, it is very important that the UNDS works together with the multilateral development banks, the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) and other international financial institutions in the implementation process in order to meet gaps in expertise, financing and programming and scale up the activities for sustainable development.

Existing and new forms of interlinkages with a broad range of development actors – primarily states, but also civil society organizations, philanthropies and private business – must be built upon, while ensuring transparency and accountability. The UNDS would need to view coordination, cooperation, partnerships, and even outsourcing of functions and operational work in the context of various inter-linkages inherent in the 2030 Agenda. The UNDS should act as an intermediary that connects development actors with each other and also broker expertise and funding. The brokering role of the UNDS should also involve communicating better the multiple dimensions and country contexts within which sustainable development takes place. The UNDS can play a key role in catalyzing the development of holistic national plans for sustainable development, which can help to guide national investment and policy choices as well as the supportive activities of development partners.

The UNDS must acknowledge the historical role that nongovernmental and citizen’s organizations have played in contributing to shape UN development policies. They have also become central actors in the national and regional implementation of United Nations global decisions through their networks and activities. There already is a wide, dense and active net of civil society actors that bring knowledge, competence, resources, innovations, and enthusiasm to the implementation process. Their sometimes critical views have also helped to adapt them to specific needs of people in particular country contexts. UNDS entities working together must develop innovative and creative forms of partnership with these civil society NGOs which can constitute a key contribution to the realization of sustainable development goals. Civil society also has an important role to play in the monitoring, reporting and learning process at all levels.

The Independent Team of Advisers (ITA) is aware of existing partnership arrangements in various UN entities, which are not necessarily interlinked to serve common but differentiated objectives of sustainable development. Synergetic effects should be exploited more rigorously in this very important, but currently highly fragmented area of development cooperation. Therefore, the ITA emphasizes the need for an optimal use of partnership arrangements at the national, regional and HQ levels. The UNDS must play catalytic roles in brokering effective partnerships channelled towards the implementation of the SDGs, as underscored in the ITA paper on partnerships.

c. Interlinkages between the spheres of science, knowledge, policy, and decision-making

The 2030 Agenda presents an enormous knowledge challenge. The UNDS and all stakeholders should systematically develop the global and entity specific knowledge-base that is necessary to create coherent and integrated sustainable development strategies at all levels. The UN should be an unrivalled center of science and knowledge development and expertise, which is also universal in scope and objective in nature. The UN, with its wide, impartial and diverse network of operational, policy development and normative activities, is in a unique position to create, manage, and disseminate knowledge in order to shape efforts to attain the 2030 Agenda.

Sustainable development requires decision-making that is informed by evidence-based analysis and longer-term perspectives and proposals. The UNDS needs capacities for prognosis and prevention. Crucial interlinkages – thematic, spatial, and temporal – must be identified and exploited to actively and preemptively support national, regional and global development processes. The UN’s rich experience with global knowledge development and dissemination should critically shape these interlinkages and their contributions to the SDGs. Important topics in that regard are policy integration between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, the practical meaning of people centered economies, the foundations of sustainable investment and consumption patterns, the policy implications of universality as well as moving from an MDG to an SDG mindset. It is equally important for the system to fully understand the impact of major technological changes underway in ICT

and other fields on the realization of SDGs. The UN's rich experience with global knowledge development and dissemination should shape our understanding of how best to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The ITA proposes the adoption and use of a system-wide Global Strategic Framework (GSF) to harness the system-wide interlinkages in knowledge development, policy analysis, norm-setting and operational functions of the UNDS and to develop a strategic perspective for common action. The proposed framework would allow UNDS entities to link their own activities to the interrelated activities of other UN entities, including peace-building and humanitarian assistance, as well as to the development strategies of governments and other development actors, providing an instrument for achieving coherent sustainable development efforts at national, regional and global levels, through mapping of efforts, monitoring of outcomes, identifying gaps and opportunities, and making recommendations for greater effectiveness. The GSF would enable the UN development entities to identify how their functions and funding contribute to specific sustainable development activities and programmes, targets and goals and would thereby also enable monitoring of system-wide funding flows. The proposed framework will reinforce and operationalize the interlinkages between knowledge, policy, and decision-making. The GSF could be used to identify gaps in terms of funding and actions which may be apparent at the system-wide level but not at the level of individual entities, or for that matter regions or countries. This will also strengthen the linkages between external and internal interlinkages. It will help to guide system-level prioritization and to guide the generation and allocation of institutional, human and financial resources.

The formulation of a Global Strategic Framework constitutes a new policy, operational, and managerial tool to help UNDS entities bring their capacities together in advancing Sustainable Development Goals. The formulation of the GSF, in particular the knowledge development process, should however take a balanced approach with both the developed countries' views and developing countries' experiences being taken into account. It would not require substantial additional costs for the system. The Deputy Secretary General for Sustainable Development (DSG-SD)², as proposed by the ITA, should be responsible for developing the GSF, which should be discussed and agreed in the system-wide Sustainable Development Board—with the active participation and leadership of UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) at the country level, and the substantive involvement of the regional commissions and the strategic policy units in UNDS entities at the HQ and regional level. While bearing in mind the critical importance of a holistic and comprehensive approach in addressing the interlinkages in the GSF, the UNDS will need to pay adequate attention to specific circumstances and ensure national/local ownership. The benefits of interlinkages or their spillover effects may be common, but the sources can be different. While formulating the GSF, the UNDS under the leadership of the proposed SDB and DSG-SD would need to take into account local knowledge, information and conditions. In this aspect, a well-managed and funded UNRC system can provide valuable support.

III. Internal linkages: A well-managed UNDS, functioning as one

a. Interlinkages between development, humanitarian assistance, security

The UNDS entities need to think and function as members of one system. This is the essence of cohesion in diversity. The current separation of the three pillars development, humanitarian assistance and peace and security becomes increasingly dysfunctional in terms of achieving their respective goals as both the

² This is not a new post. The ITA is proposing to re-designate the current DSG as the DSG for Sustainable Development. This is also consistent with the spirit of the GA resolution 52/12B that established the Office of the DSG. The ITA, however, endorses the suggestion of creating a new post of the DSG for Political Affairs, as considered in a different context.

number and duration of crises are growing. The humanitarian and security pillars are currently self-contained with few incentives for stakeholders to transition towards longer-term development and building sustainable peace. It is imperative to respond to crisis with a view towards longer-term development and strengthening resilience, while providing humanitarian assistance in the short term. As humanitarian crises become more prevalent, there is a particular need to give greater attention to processes that not only cope with symptoms, but address the root causes of conflict in order to build resilient societies. The on-going refugee crises in a number of countries around the world are a case in point, requiring a UNDS with longer-term perspectives that transcends the humanitarian-development dichotomy. The UN humanitarian response should adequately connect its vision and activities to the development pillar to build resilience and sustainable peace. As the Chair's Summary of the World Humanitarian Summit states, "A new and coherent approach is required based on addressing root causes, increasing political diplomacy for prevention and conflict resolution, and bringing humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts together". Resident Coordinators could be vested with more authority and flexibility to address unfolding crisis situations. In this framework care should be taken not to reduce resources assigned to more immediate development needs.

The ITA underscores the need for reinforcing the system-wide review of UN operational activities for development. As the only review mechanism that links the universal, inter-governmental process of the UN General Assembly to the system-wide operational activities for development, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is essential to provide guidance for repositioning of the UNDS. The ITA considers the QCPR process to have enormous potential for linking system-wide efforts and outcomes during the 2030 era. As such, the UN specialized agencies should – following consideration and approval by their governing boards – come into the scope of the QCPR resolution to ensure a comprehensive system-wide review of operational activities. The ITA also suggests that each UNDS entity should undertake a thorough, evidence-based annual review of its progress in implementation of the QCPR resolution. This repositioning of the UNDS, as proposed by the ITA, should be sequenced and completed within the 2016-2020 QCPR cycle.

The UNDS must achieve greater interlinkages across the silos, supported by adequate governance, funding and organizational arrangements. The ITA recognizes that the intergovernmental governance structures of the entities are pivotal in stressing the interlinkages and repositioning the UNDS to deliver the 2030 Agenda. The governance at entity level is unable to provide the strategic guidance needed to fully realize the Agenda's synergies and interlinkages. Vertical governance is also inadequate to maintain oversight or to ensure transparency and accountability of the whole integrated SDG Agenda. The ITA also recognizes that the system-wide horizontal governance is virtually non-existent, notwithstanding various coordination mechanisms at the senior management level. However, management coordination cannot be a substitute for horizontal, system-wide governance involving the Member States.

The ITA recognizes the need for a new intergovernmental structure to govern a more integrated UNDS. The existing governing bodies of UN funds and programmes should be progressively integrated in an over-arching Board according to a clear timetable. Fundamentally, the new Sustainable Development Board (SDB) – created through gradual merger of existing governing bodies – should strengthen both external and internal interlinkages, particularly the interlinkages between peace, security, humanitarian and development pillars of the UN, without necessarily creating an additional layer of governance structure. The SDB should have the authority to review and approve the Global Strategic Framework (GSF), as prepared by the DSG for Sustainable Development, in consultations with UNDS entities and with inputs from UNRCs and the UN Regional Commissions at the national and regional levels. The SDB should also review and approve the strategic plans of UNDS funds and programmes, ensuring that they are interlinked with each other and also to the GSF and the SDGs. Crucially, the SDB should administer a pooled fund to finance the UNRC system as well as be responsible for reviewing and enhancing its performance, with adequate institutional safeguards to ensure the quality of the UNRCs and their

impartiality in the conduct of their operational roles. As in the case of the QCPR, governing bodies of specialized agencies should consider their participation and contribution to the SDB.

b. Interlinkages between global, regional and country level

While the UNDS should be uniquely qualified to coordinate the implementation of Agenda 2030, it is not designed for a task of such complexity. The UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies that exist today at the global, regional and local levels were established to serve specific and different needs of humanity during the past seventy years. Separately the entities might have been able to cope with the different facets of, for example, the MDGs, but they are not designed or structured to support the realization of complex and highly interlinked SDGs. While the specificity of their mandates gives them unrivalled reservoirs of expertise in many different fields, and a broad range of partners globally, regionally and locally, their sectorial policy responsibilities often lead to many gaps, overlaps and inefficiencies that inhibit the synergistic effects of these interlinkages. Their specialization can also preserve structures of organization, governance and funding strategies, and, less visibly but perhaps more importantly, managerial and institutional mind-sets that hinder cooperation and coherence between the UNDS entities.

The functioning of the UNDS at global, regional and national levels should be highly linked. To operate as one system, the levels of the UN system have to be integrated through appropriate governance, management, and accountability arrangements. Strengthening the national level through RC reform requires commensurate adjustments at the global level. This requires filling the horizontal governance and leadership gap. By shifting the management of the RC-system to the re-designated Deputy Secretary General for Sustainable Development (DSG-SD), the entire UNDS acquires global coherence.

At the national level, UNDS entities should report to the RC, strengthening the RC position and new institutional tools such as the UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF)³. At the HQ-level, functional grouping of UNDS funds and programmes based on joint programmes and activities can help fill the gaps in horizontal leadership and facilitate the functioning of the DSG-SD. The functions of the Office of DSG-SD should be supported by a Strategic Executive Team, composed of Chief Executive of UNDS entities. The DSG-SD should represent the UNDS in dialogues with other major development partners, in particular the BWIs and multilateral development banks and lead the process of developing a coherent cooperation strategy with these development institutions outside the UN.

The regional dimension of the UNDS functions should also play a more important role. The Regional Economic Commissions – re-designated as Regional Sustainable Development Commissions – with their considerable staff resources should become the regional focal point – both internally, but also with regard to strengthened relationships with regional inter-governmental organizations and regional economic blocks. The operational activities of the Regional Sustainable Development Commission should interlink the national and HQ level activities of UNDS entities, providing both strategic guidance and expertise in regional contexts and also strengthening knowledge development, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation at the regional level. They can help to identify regional challenges requiring collective action as well as the relation between these and corresponding global challenges. The commissions can also play a crucial role in brokering the processes of periodic review of national plans within a regional and global context, facilitating learning between similarly and differently situated countries, as well as the identification of gaps in resources and in actions.

c. Interlinkages between governance, funding, functions, and organization of the UNDS.

³ UNSDF should replace existing UNDAFs

The UNDS can only operate as a system if there is a harmonious interlinkage of governance, functions, funding, and organizational arrangements. This makes integration not only necessary, but also an imperative. An urgent assessment needs to be undertaken to identify the required adjustments and alignment of the mandates to make the UNDS coherent, integrated, efficient and cost effective. The governance, organizational arrangements, functions, funding and capacities of UNDS entities must be re-aligned to fully exploit the interlinkages needed for realizing the SDGs. In particular, the ITA emphasizes the need for reforming existing organizational arrangements in the UNDS to ensure firm leadership, and the integration of their functions. A strong and impartial executive leadership is a *sine qua non* for ensuring that the system operates as a truly interlinked and coherent system that is fit for the 2030 Agenda.

The DSG-SD would manage the UNRC system to ensure that it autonomous, effective and empowered to serve the system as a whole and not influenced or constrained by the priorities of any individual UNDS entity. Such a UNRC system, funded by predictable resources, would strengthen the interlinkages between the functions of the entities at the country level. Repositioning of the UNRC system under the Office of DSG-SD would also ensure greater coordination between global, regional and national level efforts for the SDGs.

The DSG-SD would also lead the process of streamlining and consolidating the functions of UNDS entities, developing criteria for UN Joint Office presence and the integration of back office functions for consideration of the SDB. The Office of DSG would develop specific timelines for reviewing and consolidating UN field presence, to enhance cost effectiveness without undermining the universality of the UN. The DSG-SD should be also encouraged to scale up the Delivering as One (DaO) initiative, promoting one UN logo with an appropriate individual recognition of all participating UN entities.

The country presence of the UNDS with DaO should be organized in a single office provided there are no security restraints, incorporating experts and other staff delegated from UNDS entities and working under a single, consolidated authority, under the UN identity and one logo. The one UN logo would strengthen the DaO approach and reduce costly country-level competition among UNDS entities that weaken interlinkages and waste scarce resources. The ITA discussed the overall financing system, particularly for funding the UNRC system under DaO, and sees the need for a comprehensive adjustment, especially with regard to DaO.

For the DSG-SD as well as for functional groups, regional commissions and RCs, it is essential to recognize that authority rests on adequate financial and administrative capacities as well as mandates. The system needs a consolidated system-wide budget for effective management of financial and human resources. Coordination without authority has not been successful. The Office of DSG-SD therefore should be adequately financed and staffed to ensure that it can provide necessary managerial leadership to the UNDS and support the Sustainable Development Board. The same holds for the functional groups, bringing together UNDS entities concerned with specific goals. They need administrative capacity and financial authority, so that they can become agents of change in the longer-term repositioning of the UNDS.

The ITA recognizes that the existing fragmented funding practices – characterized by excessive earmarking of resources by the funding partners – undermine the interlinkages between peace, humanitarian and development pillars. The funding practices also undermine collaboration among the UNDS entities. In the current scenario, funding drives functions and organizational arrangements, while governance simply responds too often to the reality of funding practices. The ITA maintains that this must change in order for the UNDS to deliver sustainable development results during the 2030 era.

The ITA urges the Member States to move away from the current excessive earmarking of non-core resources to enable UNDS entities to pursue functions and activities that are fully aligned with inter-governmentally agreed development goals, such as the SDGs. The ITA reviewed various funding modalities available to UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies and concluded that there should be concerted efforts to make financial resources more predictable, flexible and transparent. It recognized that pooled resources, though presently very low, should be encouraged and seen as an important catalyst for system-wide efforts for strengthening interlinkages.

The ITA underscores the imperative of greater rationalization, harmonization and integration of current funding practices to minimize overlaps and high overhead costs and thus to maximize development impacts, and fully exploiting the synergies in interlinkages. The funding partners are strongly encouraged to fund the UNDS, shifting away from offering highly earmarked non-core resources to more flexible core resources. The funding partners that provide non-core resources should be urged through a variety of incentives and modalities to shift the composition of their contributions.

The Member States should also consider different modalities, such as negotiated pledges, to make adequate, flexible and predictable financial resources available to the UNDS entities. The SDB presents a much-needed platform for the Member States and UNDS entities to negotiate pledges, ensuring stronger linkages between funding, functions and governance. The DSG-SD can facilitate negotiated pledges on behalf of the system to prevent counter-productive competition for resources among various UN entities. Negotiated pledges through the SDB will ensure more transparent and equitable allocation of resources across entities, while preventing zero sum games and promoting alignment between funding and functions both within and across entities. The SDB will at the same time ensure that the UNDS becomes progressively more efficient and cost-effective, through the integration of back office function, joint country presence, realignment of HR practices, etc., as discussed in the organizational arrangements paper.

The ITA proposals for repositioning of the UNDS should not be seen as adding new structures and mechanisms to the system, but rather as rebalancing them. When functions are moved vertically, there should be a commensurate shift in staffing capacities and funding. For example, the DSG's office can build on UN-DOCO and personnel from the entities. The funding for the RC-system would remain largely unchanged, but it would be administered by the re-designated DSG-SD. Establishing functional groups and strengthening the RC needs to go hand in hand with concentrating personal from the system under the respective leadership positions.

IV. Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda of interlinkages and interdependence. The interlinkages, while pervasive and obvious in the everyday reality of all human endeavours, are not necessarily ingrained in the day to day operations of the UNDS. A coherent and effective UNDS will remain elusive, indeed illusory, if it cannot harvest the full potential of the interlinkages discussed in the paper. The repositioning of the UNDS for the 2030 Agenda must fully understand and embrace the inherent interlinkages between functions, governance, organizational arrangements, capacities, partnerships and funding in the context of an interlinked Agenda, while also linking the efforts of UNDS and the broader set of stakeholders in sustainable development.

The longer-term repositioning of the UNDS will require a holistic approach. The system cannot be repositioned by simply overhauling its functions or funding architectures without commensurate changes in its governance and organizational arrangements. Likewise, changing the governance system will not necessarily reposition the UNDS to respond to the 2030 Agenda without necessary changes in organizational arrangements, funding practices, capacities and partnership approaches.

As such, the ITA recommendations should be viewed as a comprehensive package – an inter-linked set of recommendations – for addressing an inter-linked set of sustainable development challenges. As mentioned in footnote (1) to this paper the forthcoming document on Findings and Conclusions will address these issues.

The implementation of the ITA recommendations are interlinked and tailored to the existing UNDS. To make cohesion in diversity a reality and to realize the full potential of the recommendations, the implementation should be phased and sequenced appropriately, following a timeline and assigning responsibilities for leading the respective reform efforts. The process of repositioning should begin with a strategic first step, re-designating the Deputy Secretary-General as the Deputy Secretary-General for Sustainable Development and fully empowering him/her to implement the necessary changes. The first step will propel a virtuous cycle of changes, which will make the UNDS coherent and integrated to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda.