

United Nations development system reform checklist

Annex to UNICEF update on implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

The United Nations development system (UNDS) reform checklist was developed by the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in response to the request made by Member States in paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution [76/4](#), to facilitate the oversight role of governing bodies. The checklist covers the elements of the repositioning of the UNDS, as set out in General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

The checklist is being presented for the first time to the UNICEF Executive Board, in conformity with its decision [2023/15](#) adopted at its annual session of 2023. It provides a comprehensive overview of UNICEF compliance status with the UNDS reform mandates and the Management and Accountability Framework. Its standardized format facilitates the monitoring of UNICEF results over several years.

The responses to the checklist questions were sourced either through existing internal tracking systems, or through the responses of UNICEF country representatives to the annual survey on the implementation of UNDS reform (which are marked with an asterisk). While the survey achieved a record high response rate of 91 per cent, in an effort to provide responses that are as comprehensive as possible to the checklist, UNICEF followed up with country representatives on selected queries, bringing the response rate to the checklist questions up to 97 per cent.

#	Question	Yes No Not Applicable	Comments
A NEW GENERATION OF UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAMS			
A. Programmes at the country level / Strategies and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks			
1	Does your entity have guidance or process in place to ensure implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) requirement to “consult with the Resident Coordinator at key stages of entity-specific strategic planning”? If yes, please briefly describe how your entity monitors adherence to this requirement.	Yes	UNICEF has embedded in its country programme procedure and country programme planning guidance the requirement to consult with the resident coordinator at key stages of strategic planning.

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2	Does your entity's guidance or processes require that country programme outcomes derive from the Cooperation Framework, and, as a result, that they are developed after, or in parallel with Cooperation Framework priorities and outcomes that have been agreed with Government?	Yes	The country programme planning guidance provides instructions on both outcome derivation from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and on country programme development, in parallel or after the finalization of the Cooperation Framework. The annual quality review of country programme documents (CPDs) conducted by UNICEF ensures adherence to the guidance, including Cooperation Framework derivation.
3	Does your entity provide the governing body with the opportunity to review the derivation of country programmes from the Cooperation Frameworks?	Yes	The confirmation letter from the resident coordinator on the derivation of CPDs from the UNSDCF is a requirement for CPD submission to the Executive Board. UNICEF is mandated to make draft CPDs available to its Executive Board 12 weeks prior to the session in which the CPDs will be considered for endorsement. This process is meant to enable Member States to review and provide comments to the documents, including their derivation from the respective Cooperation Frameworks.
4	Are all the development activities of your entity at the country level captured in the Joint Workplan of the Cooperation Framework?	Yes	All UNICEF development activities are captured in the joint workplan of the Cooperation Framework.
B. United Nations Country Team Configuration			
5	What proportion of your entities' country offices have engaged in a country configuration exercise in line with the agreed Cooperation Framework, in accordance with national development policies, plans, priorities and needs and in consultation with the host government?	40%* (See breakdown in comment box)	The configuration exercise aims at aligning the United Nations presence to the priorities outlined in the Cooperation Framework. According to the annual survey on the implementation of UNDS reform, 42.5 per cent of UNICEF representatives (in 51 country offices) declared that the configuration exercise had been initiated by resident coordinators at United Nations country team (UNCT) level and, of these, 98 per cent (in 50 country offices) declared to be

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			engaged in such exercise. The answer provided, 40 per cent, represents the proportion of UNICEF country offices with a UNCT that have engaged in a country configuration exercise.
6	In how many countries did this exercise lead to a change in your business models, country-level footprint and/or programming?	8*	Eight UNICEF representatives declared that, where initiated by the resident coordinator, the configuration exercise led to a change in UNICEF business models, country-level footprint and/or programming.
7	In how many countries did this exercise lead to an increase in the relative share of policy advice vis-à-vis project implementation, including large-scale procurement support?	10*	Ten UNICEF representatives declared that, where initiated by the resident coordinator, the configuration exercise led to an increase in the relative share of policy advice vis-à-vis project implementation. Overall, the changes mentioned by country representatives in the survey reflect efforts to better meet local needs and priorities, while enhancing collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness within the United Nations system. Examples include the establishment or consolidation of new offices, strengthening of the national and subnational footprint, increased joint programming with other United Nations agencies and efforts towards more collaborative and locally driven initiatives.
C. Multi-Country Office Review			
8	Has your entity reviewed and adjusted its programme responses and resource allocations in support of the priorities of Small Island Developing States?	Yes	In line with the commitments outlined in the 2019 multi-country office review, UNICEF continued to make progress towards supporting small island developing States. UNICEF adjusts its programme responses and resource allocations as defined in the CPDs and in accordance with the decisions of and guidance from the Executive Board. As per Executive Board mandate, UNICEF allocates at least 60 per cent of its total resources for programmes to the least developed countries and a fixed allocation of 3 per cent of regular

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			resources to countries covered by the multi-country programmes for the Eastern Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. Special attention is given in the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, to the most vulnerable group of countries, including small island developing States, based on country contexts.
9	In response to the Multi-Country Office review, has your entity taken concrete steps to review appropriateness of expertise and organizational arrangements in MCO settings, where required?	Yes	UNICEF manages two major multi-country programmes, namely the Eastern Caribbean Area Office (12 countries and territories) and the Pacific Area Office (14 countries and territories). In line with the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, UNICEF multi-country programmes are fully aligned with and contribute to the national development plans of the countries and territories they cover. Given the unique characteristics of each region and country, UNICEF will continue to use differentiated and context-specific approaches, with some region-wide programmes and strategies, and others specific to one or a cluster of countries and territories. As such, some programmes will have national coverage and others will focus on specific at-risk and vulnerable children at the subnational level. To support the implementation of the multi-country programmes, UNICEF regularly reviews and updates country programme and annual management plans to ensure an appropriate level of presence. It should be noted that UNICEF multi-country programmes bear the added challenge of working with multiple resident coordinators and their offices, which requires additional internal coordination capacity.
D. Efficiencies			
10	What % of your entity's country offices participate in the country's Business Operations Strategy	100%	UNICEF has fully signed up to collaborate with other United Nations entities through the Business Operation Strategy (BOS) and continues to participate in the BOS annual review across its country

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	(BOS)?		offices. The strategy has been implemented in all UNICEF offices and has realized over \$66 million in cumulative savings since 2019 through cost avoidance.
11	Has your entity put in place a process to track efficiency gains, achieved individually, as well as jointly with other UN entities? If yes, does the process use the agreed UNSDG common methodology for measuring the impact of efficiency initiatives?	Yes Yes	Efficiency gains achieved individually, as well as those achieved jointly with other entities, are being tracked. UNICEF follows the agreed United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) common methodology for measuring the impact of efficiency initiatives, as provided by the Development Coordination Office (DCO), for both efficiency reporting and the BOS annual review.
12	Does your entity report annually to its governing body on: (a) entity-specific efficiency gains (b) contributions to system-wide efficiency gains	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Every year, UNICEF reports on entity-specific efficiency gains and contributions to system-wide efficiency gains at the annual session of the Executive Board, through its report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which is presented as an annex to the annual report of the Executive Director, as well as through the update on implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.
13	What % of your entity's premises are common premises?	54%	A total of 212 out of 393 offices are located in common premises. The calculation excludes offices with no potential to be common premises and temporary set-ups established to respond to emergencies in Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen.
14	What % of your entity's country offices participate in a Common Back Office?	4.8% (6 country offices)	Six UNICEF country offices (Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam) participate in a Common Back Office. Since six common back offices have been implemented so far at the global level; the UNICEF participation rate is 100 per cent. UNICEF will lead service provisioning in Senegal and, jointly with the

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			United Nations Office for Project Services in Jordan and will receive services from other United Nations agencies in other four countries. UNICEF is committed to working toward the evolving target of 50 common back offices.
15	Does your organization provide services to other entities through Global Shared Services?	Yes	UNICEF provides services to the International Telecommunication Union through its Global Shared Services Centre and is open to provide related services to other United Nations entities at a global level.
16	Does your organization obtain services through another entity's Global Shared Service Centers or through other global shared means?	Yes	UNICEF participates in global shared services offered by other agencies (UN Fleet, UN Booking Hub, Driver booking hub). UNICEF signed the UN Fleet agreement in 2023 to reduce the costs of its vehicle fleet and increase sustainability. As of April 2024, UNICEF has had 32 orders from 22 country offices for 116 vehicles and will achieve additional operational efficiencies with the automation of numerous manual processes in fleet management. UNICEF also uses the UN Booking Hub in 212 locations over 78 country offices. At least 19 countries have signed onto the carpooling platform and Driver booking hub, which is another key achievement of the mutual recognition principle.
17	To what extent have you had to front load investment in order to support joint efficiency gains?	Yes	The UNICEF Senegal Country Office incurred additional expenses to prepare for the provision of common back-office services and manage the United Nations common premises.
REINVIGORATING THE ROLE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM			
18	Has the job description of your entity country representatives been revised as appropriate, following the reform, to:	(a) Yes (b) Yes	The dual reporting line is clearly stated in the UNICEF country representatives' job description, which recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the resident coordinators, and the accountability

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	<p>(a) Recognize the role and responsibility of the Resident Coordinator?</p> <p>(b) Reflect their accountability to the Resident Coordinator for their contribution to agreed results as defined in the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency development agreements?</p> <p>(c) Reflect the responsibility for active engagement in UNCT?</p>	(c) Yes	of the representatives to the resident coordinators, as well as their responsibility to actively engage in the UNCT. In 2023, UNICEF continued to ensure that its country representatives provided feedback on the resident coordinators' behavioural competencies through the online feedback tool created by DCO.
19	<p>Does your entity ensure that RCs have an opportunity to provide specific input to your entity's regional director on the skillsets and leadership profile that would be relevant in a given country context ahead of the selection and deployment of new country representatives?</p> <p>If yes, please briefly describe how your entity monitors adherence to this requirement?</p>	Yes	UNICEF continues to instruct all regional directors to discuss the profile of the country representatives with the resident coordinator ahead of selection of a new representative.
20	<p>Does the performance assessment system of your entity's country representatives:</p> <p>(a) Embed characteristics of the UN leadership framework?</p> <p>(b) Have at least one key result area linked to contribution to collective UNCT results?</p>	<p>(a) Yes</p> <p>(b) Yes</p>	The performance appraisal of UNICEF country representatives includes (i) an assessment against UNICEF core competencies; (ii) deliverables linked to the role of the country representative as a member of the UNCT; and (iii) a specific indicator related to UNCT results.
21	In what % of countries has the RC provided input into the performance review of your entity representative?	56%*	According to the annual survey on the implementation of UNDS reform, 56 per cent of country representatives have confirmed that the resident coordinator provided input into their performance

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			review.
22	In what % of countries do your country representatives inform the performance assessment of Resident Coordinators by providing feedback on RC behaviours against the RC leadership profile?	82.5%*	<p>According to the annual survey on the implementation of UNDS reform, 82.5 per cent of country representatives informed the performance assessment of resident coordinators by providing feedback on their behaviours against the resident coordinator leadership profile.</p> <p>UNICEF senior management is committed to ensuring behavioural change towards the achievement of a feedback rate of 100 per cent. To this end, the UNICEF Director of Human Resources shared specific guidance with regional offices in relation to the resident coordinator feedback tool and encouraged full participation.</p>
REVAMPING THE REGIONAL APPROACH			
23	Does your entity have guidance or a process in place to ensure your participation in Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) initiatives to allow countries and UNCTs to easily identify and access the expertise, experts, available assets, policy and strategy work, seated in a region in a unified system?	Yes	In accordance with the UNICEF accountability framework, regional directors are expected to actively engage in, and support, the United Nations coordination, collaboration, coherence and harmonization agenda at the regional level, contributing to the roll out of United Nations reform in the regions, engaging in the deliberations of the United Nations regional directors' groups and leading inter-agency initiatives, including strategies for United Nations system-wide engagement in the regions under their purview.
24	Does your entity have guidance or a process in place to encourage the entity's active engagement in regional rosters of experts?	Yes	Assurance of participation in Regional Collaborative Platform initiatives, as well as encouragement of UNICEF participation in regional rosters of experts is part of the regional directors' set of accountabilities
25	Do your entity Regional Directors / Executive	(a) Yes	UNICEF regional directors include in their performance appraisals

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	<p>Secretaries of the Regional Commissions, as members of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs), include in their individual performance compacts:</p> <p>(a) their role in ensuring implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework at the regional and country level</p> <p>(b) their responsibility in supporting UNCT members to drive joint results at the country level in line with the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency agreements</p>	(b) Yes	their role in ensuring implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework at the regional and country level, as well as their responsibility in supporting UNCT members to drive joint results at the country level in line with the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency agreements.
26	Do your Regional Directors or equivalent representatives of entities that comprise the UNCT contribute to the performance appraisal of the RCs?	Yes	UNICEF regional directors contribute to the performance appraisals of the resident coordinators.
STRATEGIC DIRECTION, OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SYSTEM-WIDE RESULTS			
A. Strategic Plans			
27	Do your entity's strategic planning documents set out how the entity is working as part of the repositioned UN development system at the global, regional and country level?	Yes	The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 recognizes a shared struggle in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the need to operationalize and accelerate the existing mandates in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) and live up to the tone and vision of the Secretary-General's report, <i>Our Common Agenda</i> . In 2023, UNICEF continued to play a leading role in the roll-out of the United Nations reform, including its operational aspects, and actively engaged in the UNDS integrated

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			and multidimensional programming approach to inform and respond to socioeconomic challenges. At the regional level, UNICEF continued to lead the multi-country offices workstream on data and analytics, and actively supported the strengthening of the system-wide evaluation function and the realignment of United Nations regional assets. To strengthen system-wide support to the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF continued to work with other United Nations entities to improve the Common Country Analyses and ensured that CPDs were directly derived from UNSDCFs as the central planning tool for the UNCT.
28	Does your entity systematically communicate to all staff and representatives the new working methods needed in line with the reform of the UN development system? If yes, please provide details in the comments section.	Yes	This is systematically done through internal communications to relevant staff and through the PPPX (Programme Policy and Procedure Site), the UNICEF internal online platform for programming guidance. The most recent example relates to the socialization of the Secretary-General's report <i>Six Transitions: Investment Pathways to Deliver the SDGs</i> .
B. Results Reporting			
29	Does your entity systematically contribute to the annual UN Country Results Report on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework?	Yes	UNICEF country offices systematically contribute to the annual United Nations country results reports on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.
30	Does your entity ensure the systematic reporting of its results at the country level on the system-wide UN INFO platform?	Yes	UNICEF country offices systematically report their results on the UN INFO platform. At headquarters level, UNICEF and DCO continue working closely together to establish the data requirements and alignment between the UNICEF internal results assessment module (RAM) and UN INFO, with phase 1 of the proof of concept for the interoperability of UN

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			INFO with UNICEF RAM completed in early 2024. The issues identified will be collectively addressed in phase 2, which will also take place in 2024.
FUNDING THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM AND DELIVERING ON FUNDING COMPACT COMMITMENTS⁹			
A. Special Purpose Trust Fund for the RC System			
31	Does your entity adhere to the UNSDG guidance on the 1% levy?	Yes	According to the annual survey on the implementation of UNDS reform, 66.5 per cent (up from 41 per cent in 2022) of the UNICEF country representatives reported that their country office had adhered to the 1% levy guidance, whereas 25 per cent reported non-applicability to their country context (mostly countries experiencing emergencies).
32	Do the amounts contributed by your entity as part of the 1% levy tally with the last available CEB estimates (also published as a funding annex at the ECOSOC OAS annually) of overall tightly earmarked contributions? If no, how do you explain the difference and what steps within the entity's remit have been taken to reduce the gap?	Not applicable	In 2023, UNICEF transferred \$8,503,910.75 to DCO for the 1 per cent levy. The question, as posed in the checklist, does not facilitate the formulation of an accurate response. First, Chief Executives Board (CEB) estimates for earmarked funding received include contributions that are exempt of the 1 per cent levy. Second, the most up-to-date estimates currently refer to 2021 data, whereas this checklist reporting time frame is 2023-2024. Third, UNICEF is a passthrough entity collecting the levy on behalf of DCO and can only provide the amount of levy that it administered and transferred on behalf of donors; it cannot track the levy that was administered and transferred by donors directly to DCO. This question would be better and more accurately answered by DCO.
B. Funding Compact			

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33	Does your entity hold a structured dialogue with its governing body on how to finance the development results in the current strategic planning cycle?	Yes	A structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan is held annually during the second regular session of the Executive Board
34	Does your entity report on its implementation of relevant entity and Member States Funding Compact commitments to its governing body?	Yes	The report on the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, presented at the second regular session of the Executive Board, includes an annex outlining progress on UNICEF and Member States funding compact commitments.
35	Recognizing the respective responsibilities of RCs and UNCTs in that regard does your entity's have guidance or a process in place for your country representatives to work with the RC to promote a coherent approach to funding as per the principles, objectives and commitments of the Funding Compact (in particular, flexible and strategic-level funding and funding that supports and facilitates common results and joint activities?)	Yes	Every four years, in line with the development of its Strategic Plan, UNICEF develops and shares with internal and external clients (i.e. country and regional offices as well as public and private partners) guidance on UNICEF thematic funding pools. The UNICEF thematic funding mechanism is aligned with multilateral resource partnerships and humanitarian contributions, as outlined in the funding compact and the Grand Bargain.
36	What % of your entity's programming expenditures consists of Joint Programmes?	7% (see breakdown in comments box)	The percentage provided reflects contributions received, as it is currently a more accurate and comprehensive measure than programming expenditure. In 2023, 7 per cent of total other resources contributions received by public sector partners went to joint programmes and 84 per cent of UNICEF country offices were engaged in joint programmes.
37	Does your entity have guidance or processes and instruments in place to facilitate use of relevant global pooled funding mechanisms (e.g., Joint SDG Fund, Spotlight Initiative, Peacebuilding Fund) by	Yes	UNICEF provides a guidance note for United Nations pooled funds (including joint programmes and multi-partner trust funds) which is issued by the UNSDG and available online. UNICEF also supports and guides colleagues in country offices on an ad hoc basis. UNICEF also launched (in April 2024) with DCO, the World Health Organization and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, an inter-agency training

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	country representatives?		course on United Nations pooled funds, targeting partnership focal points.
