

Repositioning of the United Nations Development System

PROGRESS UPDATE on the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 72/279

UNDP Executive Board Annual Session 2021



UNDP is pleased to provide its Executive Board with an update on its continued active support to the repositioning of the UN development system, as mandated by the [United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/2792 on repositioning the United Nations development system \(UNDS\)](#). This note provides notable developments since the last update on UNDS reform implementation issued in January 2021, including on UNDP's integrated policy support for the acceleration of SDG implementation and its programmatic response to COVID-19, as firmly embedded within the system-wide efforts. The note also complements earlier information provided to the Executive Board on how UNDP continues to be engaged in all aspects of the UN development system reform process, working in close collaboration with the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) at the global, regional and country levels, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO). It highlights the efforts steered by UNDP as the Vice-Chair of the UNSDG and the Chair of the UNSDG Core Group, as well as Vice-Chair of the Regional Collaborative Platforms.

KEY DATA

- 121 SERPs covering 139 countries.
- SERPs funding gap = USD 12.39 billion.
- BOS 2.0 in 59 countries.
- UNDP contribution to RCS = USD 10.3 M.

KEY RESOURCES

- [COVID-19 Data Portal](#)
- [Global Dashboard for Vaccine Equity](#)
- [UNDP's COVID-19 Data Futures Platform](#)
- [COVID Impact on SDGs](#)
- [UNSDG SDG Acceleration Toolkit](#)
- [SDG Impact](#)
- [Transforming Systems in the Decade of Action](#)

Elevating Integrated Policy Support for Sustained Recovery from COVID-19

UNDP Technical Leadership of the UN Socio-Economic Response Framework

- 1. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced pre-existing structural inequalities, widened existing gaps, and accentuated systemic challenges and risks.** It threatens to halt or obliterate progress made in realizing the 2030 Agenda and reversing hard-earned progress across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the first time in 30 years, global human development is projected to drop and the poverty gap between rich and poor countries is set to rise due to COVID-19. It is estimated that in 2030, eight out of ten people pushed back into poverty by the pandemic will live in countries with low or medium human development.
- 2. Through the COVID-19 response, the UN Development System has demonstrated its effectiveness and ability to deliver.** To date, UN Country Teams (UNCTs), under the convening role of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and through the technical leadership of UNDP, have led the preparation of over 150 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (SEIAs) in 97 countries and five regions. A significant effort has been undertaken by UNCTs to raise the number and quality of UN Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs) - to date, over 90% of UNCTs have a plan in place (a total of 121 plans covering 139 countries)¹.
- 3. The significant work on the SEIAs and SERPs has put forward valuable lessons, which UNDP – including through its co-chairmanship of the UNSDG Task Team on Socio-Economic Response – will consolidate**

¹ The total SERPs' funding gap is estimated at USD 12.39 billion. To help cover the gap, the UN entities repurposed USD 3.0 billion and mobilized additional USD 2.18 billion.

and draw on as part of the UNSDG priorities in 2021. For example, assessment tools and agencies' internal systems will need better interoperability to enable and accelerate collective planning and implementation. Furthermore, UNDP is engaging in the UNSDG's efforts to integrate the SERPs into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CFs) as of 2021.

4. To adequately monitor the progress and achievements of the UN collective efforts in the socio-economic response at the country level, **UNDP and DCO in close collaboration with the UNDS entities, have led the development of a COVID-19 indicator framework**, with 18 programme indicators built around the five pillars of the [UN Socio-Economic Framework for COVID-19](#). **A total of 131 UNCTs reported data on COVID-19 response via the [COVID-19 Data Portal](#), making this dashboard the most comprehensive dataset on the UN's response and the first attempt of this kind to report on UN System-wide programmatic outcomes.**²
5. **Collective results reporting remains a key challenge within the UN Development System and is one of the UNSDG priorities in 2021.** Upgraded systems and processes, in particular around data validation, are required. These improvements will need to be accompanied by stronger data governance at country and global levels, and renewed commitment from all UN entities. The COVID-19 Data Portal is expected to become the foundation for broader UN collective reporting efforts to be taken forward in 2021.
6. **UNDP is working with governments, the UN System, and other partners to support vaccine preparedness and deployment, under the leadership of WHO and UNICEF.** Building on UNDP's COVID-19 offer 2.0 and its role as technical lead of the UN's socio-economic response framework, UNDP's enhanced support focuses on working with partners to contribute to national vaccine deployment plans under the leadership of UNCTs/RCs, WHO, and UNICEF in three areas: digital solutions for vaccine delivery, data for vaccine equity, and greening COVID vaccination. UNDP's support in this area is another demonstration of UNDP's integrator function.
7. **In collaboration with WHO, UNDP is developing a [Global Dashboard for Vaccine Equity](#)³, to be launched in June 2021.** The dashboard, which will be anchored in [UNDP's COVID-19 Data Futures Platform](#), will provide decision-makers with new data on vaccine pricing and supply, combined with multiple data trackers on COVID-19 to ensure that vaccine access is equitable and leaves no one behind. The dashboard is currently piloted in Nepal, Mali, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Ghana and Kenya.
8. UNDP's rapid response to COVID-19 was possible through the mobilization and reallocation of nearly \$1 billion to assist over 170 countries and territories. **Throughout 2020 and into 2021, UNDP's financial and non-financial partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) significantly advanced as part of our COVID-19 response.** UNDP partnered with IFIs in joint analyses and assessments, resulting in joint publications including the recently launched report on [Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), developed in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank and UNESCAP. Additionally, financial contributions from IFIs amounted to USD 155 million.

Integrated Policy Advice and Services for SDG Acceleration

9. The gap between the rich and the poor is set to rise due to the impact of COVID-19. This will likewise have an effect on the SDGs. **To better understand this correlation, in April 2021, UNDP released a [second flagship report](#), which assesses the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs by using advanced scenario modeling.** This groundbreaking analytical work will help the UN System and all partners assess three potential recovery trajectories and capture the multidimensional impacts of the pandemic. The study concludes that through an ambitious, yet feasible, set of 'SDG investments' across governance, social

² Examples of initial results from the COVID-19 Data Portal are available in '[Update on UNDP's Socio Economic Response Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030](#)' which point out to a powerful collective response by the UN system.

³ The Dashboard will include two key components as value propositions to governments and UNCTs: i) multidimensional vaccine data and ii) hyperlocal vaccine analytics.

protection, green recovery and digitalization, countries can return to their development trajectory prior to the pandemic and accelerate action towards the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

10. **As part of its system-wide offer and its integrator role, UNDP has placed at UNCTs' and other practitioners' disposal the [COVID-19 Data Futures Platform](#)**, which allows experimentation with data analytics across countries and regions. The Platform helps advance UNCTs' integrated policy advice to governments, by comparing impact across multiple SDGs *before* investments are locked in and policy decisions are made. To date, the COVID-19 Data Futures Platform has been accessed and used in 105 countries, with UNDP currently working with 40 countries on specific requests, including the Philippines and Egypt that have directly used the futures modeling work to inform national level COVID recovery.
11. **UNDP is continuously engaging with RCs, UNCTs and partners on the provision of integrated development solutions across the multitude of sustainable development areas.** The most recent UNDP survey on UNDS Reform Implementation undertaken with UNDP Country Offices in April 2021, indicates that UNDP offices are providing integrated SDG solutions (92%), capabilities in system approaches (70%), followed by SDG data analytics (55%). These services are part of UNDP's integrator role and expertise to provide integrated solutions to governments, which help address complex development challenges through multidimensional approaches.
12. **UNDP led the finalization of the [UNSDG SDG Acceleration Toolkit](#) for country application, in collaboration with UNICEF and with contributions from other UN entities.** The toolkit, which will be launched in May, is intended to assist UNCTs in responding to governments' requests to harness synergies and identify SDG accelerators, deliver on the pledge to 'leave no one behind' and conduct risk-informed development planning.
13. These and other system-wide initiatives aimed at strengthening the UNDS integrated policy advice –as also called for by the 2020 [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review \(QCPR\)](#)– **will be taken forward by an Integrated Policy Practitioners' Network (IPPN)**, emanating from the UNSDG Task Team on Integrated Policy Support. The IPPN⁴ is designed as a dynamic inter-agency and multi-stakeholder space for knowledge-sharing and peer support and will link existing efforts on SDG integration across UN agencies and beyond. The IPPN will initiate pre-launch events in May, prior to its launch in July on the margins of the High-Level Political Forum.
14. As a common service to the UN, **the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme continues to be closely engaged in supporting UNDS reform implementation**, including through closer interaction with UNCTs and Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs), process simplification and streamlining, and continued diversification of partners. In the last year of its [2018-2021 Strategic Framework](#), UNV will continue to champion the UNDS reform through close collaboration with UNDP and other partners and in line with QCPR mandates.
15. **The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) plays an active role as part of UNDP's broader support to the repositioning of the UNDS.** UNCDF is actively engaged in the development of Cooperation Frameworks in several LDCs and is upscaling its unique financing expertise and investment capacity in support of the wider UNDS through various multi-agency and Joint SDG Fund initiatives, including the Global Fund for Coral Reefs with UNDP and UNEP, joint UN support to Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) in 10 countries, and the establishment of blended finance, for example the "[Build Malawi Window](#)" with UNDP and FAO.

⁴ As a one-stop-shop for integrated policy practitioners, the IPPN will be a repository of state-of-the-art resources on policy integration, strengthening the interface between policymakers and policy integration practitioners, and offering a platform to exchange solutions and good practices on integrated implementation of the SDGs.

Financing for Sustainable Development and COVID-19 Response

16. COVID-19 has tested multilateral cooperation and has had a devastating impact on development finance. The [2021 Financing for Sustainable Development Report](#) of the Secretary-General's Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development warns that COVID-19 could lead to a lost decade for development. At the same time, the 2020 QCPR calls for the UNDS to “further explore financing strategies for the SDGs”.
17. With its well versed expertise on development financing rooted in analytics and practice, **UNDP continued to engage with UN entities and other partners to advance the Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. UNDP’s recent establishment of the [SDG Impact](#), which focuses on eliminating barriers to and driving integrity for SDG-enabling investment at scale, marked a soft launch of the [SDG Investor Platform](#). The SDG Investor Platform leverages UNDP’s presence in more than 170 countries and territories to provide private sector investors with access to country level market intelligence and facilitate investor connections.
18. **Going forward, the financing of the UN socio-economic response plans will be at the epicenter of COVID-19 recovery efforts**. The average funding gap of the costed SERPs amounts to USD 48 million, totaling USD 12.39 billion. In various COVID-19 response plans, a clear linkage with the INFF⁵ process is articulated as a tool to understand the national financing for development landscape. The commitment to sustainable financing strategies with strong national ownership is a key entry point for agencies to enhance national prioritization of SDG finance. The UN – with UNDP providing substantive expertise – is leveraging its collective assets to support governments in developing INFFs that will enable them to facilitate financing for COVID-19 recovery. With the approval of 62 proposals on SDG financing of the Joint SDG Fund, UNDP is committed to further roll-out of the INFFs at country level to align support for the COVID-19 recovery. Advocating and supporting governments to align their finance with green, equitable and resilient recovery strategies requires a joined-up UN effort.

Fostering Joint Planning, Implementation and Reporting for SDG Acceleration

19. The 2030 Agenda was constructed to address complex and multidimensional challenges. It is a systems approach to the complexity of human development that puts the most vulnerable at its center. There is, however, a profound need to rethink ‘*the how*’ of achieving the SDGs and to build forward from COVID-19, which requires **transitioning away from solutions that compartmentalize policy areas towards ‘systems’ thinking that eliminates siloed approaches**.
20. To foster a culture of systems design-thinking, UNDP in partnership with the Presencing Institute (PI) is leading a four-month applied learning experience that supports UN staff to navigate complex development challenges. Bringing together 450 participants from across seven agencies⁶, **this is an action learning lab and is the first of its kind aiming at strengthening ‘systems’ thinking within the UN system**. It features an innovative curriculum of a series of workshops, case clinic circles and peer coaching, and a diverse group of thought leaders. The action learning lab is part of a wider UNDP led initiative – [Transforming Systems in the Decade of Action](#) – which in parallel hosts a series of global dialogues, and a [collective intelligence space for inquiry into the 2020 Human Development Report](#) – all aimed at strengthening individual and collective design-thinking capabilities and generating systems transformation within the UNDS.

Strengthening programme alignment and reporting

21. Following the approval of the new UNSDCF guidelines in 2019, **UNDP has ensured full alignment, including by adopting Cooperation Framework outcomes verbatim into UNDP’s Country Programme Documents (CPDs)**. Under this approach, 31 new CPDs are fully aligned with Cooperation Frameworks in

⁵ [INFF Knowledge Platform](#)

⁶ UNDP, UNCDF, UNHCR, FAO, UNEP, UN Women, UNV

substance and sequence. This has, however, meant that where CFs are delayed, there will also be delays of CPD submission to the Executive Board. For example, in 2020, 6 countries⁷ finalization of CPDs were delayed due to CF timing⁸.

22. **UNDP has been contributing to strengthening UNCTs' capacities for a robust Theory of Change** as part of the Cooperation Frameworks. Within the UNSDG Task Team on Programme Development and Results, UNDP is leading the development of a practical Theory of Change guidance.

Cross-pillar collaboration – Humanitarian, Development and Peace

23. UNDP continues to support UNDS' efforts in strengthening coordination, collaboration and coherence with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts. One of the many ways this contribution unfolds is through **the UNDP Administrator's co-chairmanship of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC), with the OCHA Emergency Relief Coordinator**. As a snapshot of its work, the JSC is supporting the RCs and UNCTs in Chad and Niger in identifying key ways to enhance collaboration. Lessons learned from these experiences will be integrated into the Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and the CFs, with the aim of bridging the three pillars and improving the UN's overall delivery in fragile contexts.
24. **UNDP is also bolstering its corporate alignment to advance the cross-pillar collaboration at different levels**. For example, a knowledge platform is currently being developed to capture best practices to be applied in programming, partnership building and outreach. A cadre of professionals that are HDP "tri-lingual" champions is also being compiled to help implement and mainstream cross-pillar collaboration within UNDP and the wider HDP community.

Supporting the Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System

25. **Since the launch of the UNDS reform in 2017, UNDP has supported the repositioning of the RC System (RCS) through the various streams of the reform**. Under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, UNDP – as the entity with the most extensive institutional background of having managed the RC system as well as in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the UNSDG and Chair of the Core Group – has driven key transformative initiatives in support of the UNDS reform implementation.
26. **Three years into its implementation, UNDP continues to be strongly committed to the advancement and success of the reinvigorated RC System**, including through further investments of financial and human capacities. In 2020, UNDP's local cost-sharing contribution to RCOs was approximately USD 236,000 (based on data provided by 86% of UNDP Country Offices). In cooperation with other agencies and in coordination with RCs, UNDP leads and/or provides substantive support in multidimensional areas, such as climate change, early recovery, and digitalization, in addition to the broader SDG support through policy integration initiatives and support.
27. **UNDP continues to support the RC System with the highest cost-sharing contribution of any single UNDS entity, amounting to USD 10,291,362 in 2021**. A significant challenge has been that UNDP's portion of the cost-sharing of the RC system has increased from approximately 0.5% of its core budget in 2013 to 1.7% in 2021. This is against the backdrop of an uncertain funding outlook for 2021 and beyond due to the impact of COVID-19.
28. Overall, **it is well recognized that the RCS funding model needs to become sustainable**, with the voluntary funding to the Special Purpose Trust Fund ([SPTF](#)) for the RCS remaining below its ambition. The ongoing review of the Resident Coordinator system is an opportunity to evaluate the current model, including the effectiveness of the 1% coordination levy. The 2019 UN Board of Auditors Report noted that the costs for administrating the levy for UNDP were too high compared to the levy income. Furthermore, the Board's

⁷ [CPDs approved in 2020 Executive Boards and January 2021](#).

⁸ UNDP survey on UNDS reform implementation, April 2021.

analysis confirmed that in practice the collection of the levy had reduced funds available for programming, often with funding partners deducting the levy from the initially envisaged contribution amount.

29. **UNDP remains fully supportive of the implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), considering it as one of the key priority areas within UNDS reform.** UNDP's analysis of MAF implementation to date confirms that UNDP is fully compliant with its provisions.
30. As the MAF is currently being revised and updated by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, **UNDP in alignment with other UN entities, will continue to advocate for the centrality and application of the principle of mutual accountability across the RC System.** It is important to the spirit and intentions of the reforms to ensure that the MAF clearly reflects mutual accountability at all levels as its guiding principle, collective ownership through collective decision-making via the UNSDG, as well as accountability of UNDS Principals to their respective governing bodies.

Strengthening capacities in support of Multi-Country Offices and SIDS

31. In support of the Multi-Country Office (MCO) review recommendations ([General Assembly Resolution 74/297](#)), **UNDP has steered the scale up of the UN offer to SIDS, through the provision of additional capacities to SIDS and enhanced support to the four workstreams under the steer of the UNSDG Core Group requiring system-wide action:** policy support, financing, data, and South-South Cooperation.
32. In collaboration with other UN entities, **UNDP is leading on the conceptualization of a finance facility that will seek to enable SIDS covered by MCOs to access financial instruments for SDG acceleration and COVID-19 response and recovery.** Similarly, as an instrument to strengthen SIDS planning and financing capacities, **UNDP in collaboration with other UN entities, continues to expand the development of the INFFs**, currently with 9 INFFs in the Pacific and 4 in the Caribbean.
33. **UNDP strengthened its technical and policy capacity support to MCO serviced countries and territories**, by deploying a Blue Economy Specialist in the Pacific Office (Fiji) as well as a Digital Specialist in the Caribbean (Barbados) to support UNDP's "[Rising Up for SIDS](#)" offer. UNDP also plans to deploy a new Deputy Resident Representative position in the new North Pacific MCO.
34. **Through the expansion of UNDP's Accelerator Lab network, UNDP added two additional labs in MCO countries** (Mauritius and Samoa). Also, through the Accelerator Labs, UNDP is supporting the UNCT in Fiji to develop an innovative COVID-19 Rapid Policy Appraisal, which will provide a clear understanding of the nature and extent of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, provide policy direction, and determine programming entry points for UN Agencies and other partners. The Accelerator Lab in the Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean is supporting governments with the development of ocean-based economies and innovative tourism recovery initiatives under the broader *Blue Economy for Green Island* approach.

Consolidating the Regional Dimension

35. As of January 2021, all Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) have been formally established and are functioning in all regions. In early 2021, important progress has been achieved by each RCP.
36. **In Asia Pacific**, the RCP has launched the [Knowledge Management Hub](#), which facilitates access of Member States and UNCTs to knowledge resources, communities of practice and expertise across the UNDS, as well as the 'One UN Asia Pacific' [SDG Gateway](#). The [One UN Asia Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021](#) was also released in March 2021.

37. **In Latin America**, the RCP is delivering policy advice to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, while facilitating joint actions to address gaps in SDG implementation. UNDP in cooperation with UNFPA and other RCP members, led the campaign [#2021YearForRecovery](#) in support of countries' COVID-19 recovery efforts, reaching over 9 million people in two weeks. UNDP, ECLAC and DCO strengthened the RC Office Economists' capacities through training and creating a knowledge sharing network.
38. **In Europe and Central Asia**, the RCP launched a [Dashboard for SDG indicators](#) to support robust SDG monitoring in the region. Additionally, the review of Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs), which underscored technical support to UNCTs, regional policy development, common positioning and advocacy, should remain the core mandate of the IBCs will help ensure the alignment of IBC mandates to the UNDS reform expectations.
39. **In the Arab States**, the RCP led the development of the [Arab Sustainable Development Report 2020](#), which was presented at the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development and will be taken as the basis for RCP support to SDG implementation in the region, informing COVID-19 recovery efforts. The RCP also adopted IBC workplans for 2021.
40. **In Africa**, the RCP launched the Africa [UN](#) Knowledge Management Hub for COVID 19, which provides a one stop point for information and resources to tackle the pandemic. The Africa RCP continues to promote a number of flagship initiatives to support African Union Member States attain strategic priorities of both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 and to accelerate COVID-19 recovery efforts, especially in data and statistics, macroeconomic stability and diversification (including support for AfCFTA implementation); digitalization, climate change, and others. The recently adopted 2021 workplan of RCP places strong emphasis on joined-up work for the COVID 19 response and recovery.

Efforts towards the SG's efficiency agenda and Support to functioning of Resident Coordinator Offices

41. **In collaboration with other UN entities, UNDP is leading on the roll-out and implementation of the Business Operations Strategies 2.0 in 59 UNCTs (out of 131), with 54 fully completed by April 2021.** In addition, UNDP is working closely with DCO on the roll-out of 12 pilot countries with a Common Back Office.
42. **The importance of the business efficiency agenda is fully recognized and advanced.** As per the latest estimates, the annual efficiency gains specifically from entity-specific initiatives (not those related to system-wide endeavors), increased by 57% between 2019 and 2020 to USD 100 million. While some of the reported savings are notional amounts in terms of cost avoidance and not available for re-investment, UNDP firmly believes that agency specific monetary efficiency gains should continue to be used for programme implementation and re-invested within the incurring agency. UNDP's investments in institutional performance have generated significant institutional savings, which allowed UNDP to repurpose an estimated USD 355 million from what would have been institutional expenditures into programmatic investments in 2018-2020, where these resources were needed most.
43. In the past few years, one of UNDP's key contributions to common premises and services has been the support to the **consolidation of the UN City in Copenhagen, with 12 UN Agencies and over 2,000 UN staff.** The UN City in Copenhagen is setting an example not only as a Common Premise, but as an innovation and culture hub.

44. **UNDP continued to provide effective operational support to the transitioning and functioning of 131 RC Offices and three regional offices.** During 2019 and 2020, UNDP administered USD 335.4 million of the UN SPTF and provided services in human resources, finance, procurement and general operations. The online RCS Service Portal, rolled out in 2019, to date accounts 39,000 requests with a 80% completion rate.
45. **In 2021, UNDP will continue its provision of select services, with other services and support having been transitioned to the UN Secretariat.** Despite the transfer of some of these support services, UNDP will continue to administer SPTF funds in the amount of USD 60.2 million.

Advancing on the Implementation of Funding Compact

46. In light of the severe downward pressures on ODA and related potential cuts to funding, **UNDP is working with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women to analyze and identify mitigation strategies** to address the possible impact on system-wide efforts, and directly on the implementation of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The recent decision by some partners to cut funding to several UN entities will have a significant weakening effect on the UN's normative work and the critical role of multilateralism. This is at a time when UN's leadership has proven to be vital on a wide range of issues; including supporting work to prevent a reversal on the gains made on SDGs due to COVID-19, convening governments to accelerate action on climate change and protecting human rights including the rights of children, youth and women.
47. Notwithstanding the challenges in 2020, UNDP has seen progress in some of the Funding Compact commitments. **Core contributions grew by 13% in 2020, reaching USD 697 million, and 50% of core contributions were backed by multi-year pledges.** Although this is positive for our continued support to programme countries and reflects funding partners' confidence in UNDP's ability to deliver results, the proportion of core funding remained at 13% of the overall amount of funding received, which is low compared to the 30% Funding Compact target.
48. **UNDP also saw notable improvements in its flexible and non-core resources,** as contributions to the Thematic Funding Windows increased by 21%, providing additional support for greater system-wide coherence.
49. In response to its Executive Board recommendations, UNDP has steadily worked to improve system-wide efforts through joint activities, which is noticeable through **an increase from 8.4% to 10% in 2020 of its joint programme expenditures.** In order to reach the 15% target, UNDP is working with other UN entities within the UNSDG, to develop a definition that better captures joint activities so that they are not limited to joint programmes.
50. In 2020, contributions from UN pooled funds decreased from 10.8% to 8% of non-core resources, with the decline most notably related to the transfer of UNDP's Management Agent function of humanitarian pooled funds to OCHA. **However, the proportion of funding received by UNDP as a participating agency through pooled funding mechanisms has increased by 77% in 2020, compared to 2019.**
51. UNDP is helping strengthen the UN's collective response to the pandemic through the **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.** Out of the total contributions to the Fund (USD 73.5 million), UNDP is implementing USD 9.6 million with interventions under the three pillars of the socio-economic response: suppressing transmission (22%), mitigating social impact (70%) and recovering better (8%), thus supporting countries' rapid recovery and building back better. For example, with funds from the COVID-19 Response and

Recovery Fund in Uruguay, UNDP – along with UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF – is supporting the gendered analyses of COVID-19 socio-economic response strategies together with national and sub-national institutions.

52. **UNDP continued its active engagement in the Joint SDG Fund, including as the Chair of the Fund’s Steering Committee.** In 2020, the Fund approved 62 proposals totaling USD 60 million to reinforce SDG financing architecture at the country level, including through support to the design of the INFFs. Of the total Joint SDG Fund approved funding to UNDP (USD 50.3 million), 76% of resources contribute to SDG finance initiatives. For example, in Malawi, UNDP and UNICEF helped align the National Financing Strategy with the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Plan. UNDP is also participating in several Joint Programmes of the Social Protection and Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) window, as is the case in Costa Rica, where UNDP is leveraging regional tools and resources from the regional system “[Indica Igualdad](#)”.

UNDP within the reinvigorated UNSDG

53. Under the Chairmanship of the UN Deputy Secretary-General, **the UNDP Administrator continues to serve as both the Vice-Chair of the UNSDG as well as the Chair of the UNSDG Core Group**, in support to the reinvigorated UNSDG.
54. UNDP, as a trusted development partner and through its ability to utilize its multisectoral and multidisciplinary foundations for the benefit of the entire UNSDG, **continued to provide strategic support and substantive contributions to the UNSDG, the UNSDG Core Group and its Task Teams and subsidiary mechanisms.**

Conclusion

55. In the past year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has been forced to confront a series of grave and interrelated socio-economic, ecological, and political crises. **As 2020 demonstrated, the UN Development System can effectively work as one against the most disruptive development challenge of our time.** 2020 has also yielded a rich set of lessons learned to further improve on in our collective endeavors going forward.
56. Moving forward, **we need to maintain and sharpen the UNDS’ ability to be agile as a system, as there is no ‘post-pandemic’ reality for many countries.** It is Member States’ expectation – as confirmed by the 2020 QCPR – that the UNDS contributes to a model of recovery capable of generating new, more inclusive and sustainable solutions. The notion of recovery cannot be limited to a return to an unequal and unsustainable development model. The UNDS is well positioned to help deliver on this expectation.
57. **UNDP welcomes the new QCPR as a green light to consolidate the reforms, contribute to key thematic and cross cutting issues, and advance integrated policy solutions.** Through its new Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNDP will demonstrate its comparative advantage not only by way of its “whole-of-system” ability to deliver on the QCPR resolution, but also in leveraging its experience across development contexts and with a variety of partners in developing and advancing integrated solutions. This collaborative approach to finding solutions to development puzzles, exploiting partners’ synergies and understanding linkages between the SDGs, is essential to achieving scale and transformative impact. As it did during COVID-19, UNDP will continue to put its capacities and experience at the service of the system and government partners to create integrated solutions, throughout this year and looking ahead to the new strategic planning cycle 2022-2025.