



## INFORMATION NOTE

*Implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system, within the context of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and General Assembly resolution 76/4 on the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding arrangement*

### 1. Introduction

This information note provides an update on UNFPA support to the implementation of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, within the context of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) and the review of the functioning of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, complementing the previous information notes to the Executive Board. This information note covers the period of April 2021 to April 2022.

### 2. **Aligning the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, with United Nations development system reform and the 2020 QCPR for accelerated SDG progress**

The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, is an urgent call to action for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the three transformative results – ending the unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

The Strategic Plan builds on the continued engagement of UNFPA in the implementation of the United Nations development system reforms and places a stronger focus on coordination, collaboration, efficiency and coherence, recognizing that the world is at the halfway point to 2030 and that accelerated, and joined-up efforts are essential to achieve the SDGs. In this regard, the new strategic plan reaffirms UNFPA commitment to providing integrated policy and programmatic support to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs during the Decade of Action.

During the 2022 UNFPA leadership meetings that have taken place in all regions, UNFPA senior managers reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of the reforms and stressed the importance of leveraging the reformed United Nations development system to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and to rescue the SDGs. UNFPA senior managers committed to providing innovative, evidence-informed and rights-based solutions that cover both normative and operational dimensions, for strengthened system-wide results.

The UNFPA Strategic Plan firmly aligns with the policy guidance of the 2020 QCPR, placing a stronger focus on leaving no one behind, targeting the furthest behind first, addressing the needs of countries in special situations and fostering more complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.

The UNFPA Strategic Plan leverages United Nations development system reform to address the effects of intersecting crises, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, rising poverty, climate change, natural disasters, conflict, insecurity and instability. With 56 percent of the UNFPA Strategic Plan outcome indicators being derived directly from globally agreed frameworks – including the QCPR Monitoring and Reporting Framework, 2021-2024, and the 2030 Agenda Global Indicator Framework – and with 73 per cent of output-level indicators being common or complementary, UNFPA will significantly contribute to the monitoring of system-wide implementation of QCPR commitments and contributions to the achievement of the SDGs.

### **3. Contributing to the consolidation of United Nations development system reform**

UNFPA continues to support the full consolidation of the United Nations development system reforms to contribute to accelerated action to rescue the SDGs in the Decade of Action, including by actively engaging in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). UNFPA continues to co-chair the UNSDG Business Innovation Group, with UNICEF, and has played a key role in driving the efficiency agenda within the United Nations system. UNFPA also contributes to the work of several UNSDG inter-agency working groups under the overall coordination of the Development Cooperation Office (DCO). For example, UNFPA actively engages in the work of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Programme Development and Results, which develops guidance for UNCTs to promote collaboration and coherence in programming at country-level.

In 2023, UNFPA will launch its third internal survey to further assess United Nations development system reform implementation at country and regional levels.

#### ***Mutual accountability and collective ownership of the Resident Coordinator system***

The independent Resident Coordinator system, and the principle of mutual accountability, are cornerstones of the United Nations development system reforms. Resident Coordinators have continued to support UNFPA participation in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts toward building back better and rescuing the SDGs.

With the endorsement of the updated Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) by UNSDG Principals, UNFPA developed an internal guidance note for country and regional offices. The guidance note updates UNFPA field offices on changes to the MAF and reinforces the Fund's corporate commitment to the principle of mutual accountability between Resident Coordinators and UNFPA Country Representatives. Efforts to implement the MAF are being complemented by the on-going development of an orientation package for Resident Coordinators and a corporate approach for more effectively engaging Resident Coordinators in the work of UNFPA.

In line with the Resident Coordinator System review, UNFPA has promoted inter-agency mobility between the Fund and the RC system and has ensured a dual reporting model with UNFPA Representatives and RCs. The UNFPA People Strategy foresees building a new internal UNFPA RC Talent Pipeline to prepare a select group of diverse UNFPA staff to be considered by DCO to enter the Resident Coordinator Talent Pool.

These efforts support the system-wide broader goal to enhance coherence across the work of the United Nations development system at the country level, under the leadership of resident coordinators.

## ***Engagement in the development and implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks***

UNFPA continues to actively engage in the development and implementation of Common Country Analysis (CCA) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks), for enhanced coordination and coherence of United Nations development system activities at the country level. UNFPA also ensures that all its Country Programmes are derived from and aligned with nationally agreed and nationally owned Cooperation Frameworks. UNFPA country programmes copy the verbatim outcomes of cooperation frameworks.

In 2021, UNFPA undertook an analysis of the Fund's engagement in the development of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, to assess its substantive contributions to the work of UNCTs. Nearly all the 56 CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks that have been developed since the start of the reforms, integrate the critical issues of ending unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, as a means for achieving the SDGs. Generally, at least one of the UNFPA priority areas of work is included as a Cooperation Framework outcome indicator.

UNFPA contribution to the development and implementation of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks has enabled the Fund to further leverage inter-agency coordination to address national priorities for the achievement of the SDGs. However, UNFPA Country Representatives have observed that more effort is required to ensure that UNCT joint workplans that derive from agreed Cooperation Frameworks lead to enhanced system-wide results to achieve the SDGs.

### ***Multi-Country Office review***

UNFPA has continued to implement the recommendations of the Multi-Country Office (MCO) review. For example, in response to the La Soufriere volcano eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the UNFPA Subregional Office in the Caribbean worked through inter-agency mechanisms, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, to ensure that there was consideration for sexual and reproductive health as well as prevention of gender-based violence, in system-wide efforts.

In the Pacific subregion, UNFPA has made progress in strengthening its physical presence, with the recruitment of national staff positions, including Assistant Representatives in the Federated States of Micronesia and Samoa, as well as senior national officer positions in Tonga, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Additionally, there has been increased policy and technical coherence across the three Pacific MCOs with UN-Women, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, ILO, IOM in the areas of gender-based violence, the humanitarian peace and development coordination, and on youth empowerment and comprehensive sexuality education.

Acknowledging the significant progress UNFPA has made in implementing the recommendations of the MCO review, additional core resources would enable UNFPA to strengthen its technical capacities in MCOs, to meet the demands of countries, in particular small island developing states.

### ***Regional review***

UNFPA has also continued to actively engage in all five Regional Collaborative Platforms, including issue-based coalitions and the peer support groups, to drive joint actions towards accelerating the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs. UNFPA co-

chairs issue-based coalitions in nearly all regions, with a focus on gender equality, human rights, youth and data.

For example, in Africa, UNFPA co-leads with the Economic Commission for Africa, the opportunity and issue-based coalition on integrated data and statistics for sustainable development, which in 2021 launched the Africa United Nations Data for Development Platform. The Platform serves as a repository that captures high-quality data and evidence on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs from all the African countries.

Through the active participation of UNFPA in regional Peer Support Group, the Fund also contributes to integrated, system-wide support to UNCTs in the development of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, dialogues between the Resident Coordinators and Regional Directors on the roadmap to develop Cooperation Frameworks allows UNFPA to suggest support based on its comparative advantage, and quickly highlight issues not well reflected in the roadmap. Nonetheless, challenges remain in the capacity RC offices and regional DCO offices to ensure that Cooperation Frameworks are developed in a timely manner.

Through the implementation of the UNFPA Regional Initiatives, as a part of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, the Fund will continue to actively engagement in the work of the Regional Collaborative Platforms and other regional coordination mechanisms, to both contribute and leverage the capacities of the United Nations development system at regional level for the accelerated achievement of the SDGs.

### ***Funding Compact***

UNFPA remains committed to achieving all Funding Compact targets, including accelerating results for countries through increased collaboration, improving transparency and accountability and increasing efficiencies. Regarding United Nations development system commitments and indicators, UNFPA is meeting or surpassing 95 per cent of targets. UNFPA is meeting all targets related to: cooperation for results at the country level; collaboration on joint evaluation; Strategic Plans and reporting; operational consolidation for efficiency gains; transparency and reporting; linking resources to SDG results; visibility; and cost-recovery policies and rates. Progress made in these areas is referenced throughout this document.

UNFPA recorded a decline in progress made by Member States in delivery on some Funding Compact commitments. In 2021, UNFPA saw a significant growth in humanitarian funding. As many Funding Compact indicators are exclusively linked to development funding, indicators do not always provide a full picture of funding trends. Nevertheless, the overall core to non-core ratio fell to 28 per cent in 2021, which is below the 30 per cent threshold. This is due to a significant growth in co-financing revenue coupled with a slight decline in core funding. While funding via interagency pooled instruments was above targets, there was a decline from 32 per cent to 30 per cent in 2021 and there was also a decline in the number of donors to pooled funds. On thematic funding, targets were surpassed and there was a slight increase in the percentage of funding and the number of donors. Through efforts to expand the donor base, UNFPA increased the number of donors to core from 96 to 101 in 2021.

### ***Common business operations***

The United Nations system contribution to the achievement of the SDGs is underpinned by common business operations and efficiency agenda, and UNFPA has continued to make progress in increasing its utilization of common business operations for increased efficiency and cost savings. In 2021 UNFPA reported actual efficiency gains from internal initiatives of 8 million. In

addition, efficiency gains from bilateral initiatives have amounted to 1.2 million. The total efficiency gains of \$ 9.2 million in 2021 show a steady increase of efficiencies from \$6.6 million (2019) and \$8.3 million (2020). Further, projections based on the completed UNCT Business Operations Strategies show that UNFPA could avoid up to \$7 million per year in additional costs by implementing the services developed through the Business Operations Strategies.

UNFPA also maintains its interest in co-locating its offices with other United Nations entities, where possible. The UNFPA share of common premises stood at 72 per cent as of the end of 2021. Though the interagency task team on common premises efforts are underway to identify locations with the highest potential for creating additional common premises.

As the United Nations system continues to pursue common business operations, UNFPA remains interested in service provision by another United Nations entity through a local and global shared services centre (GSSC). Through an interagency working group, potential non-location dependent services have been identified that could be provided by existing GSSCs to other United Nations entities. Efforts are also under way to establish Local Shared Service Centres (LSSC) for location-dependent services in specific countries with efficiency potential.

In addition to the above, UNFPA has piloted fleet leasing possibilities with UNHCR in 2021 and will roll out a global fleet leasing programme with ‘UNFleet’ in 2022, to further increase efficiency gains.

### ***System-wide evaluation***

UNFPA continues to be fully engaged in contributing to system-wide evaluation mechanisms through the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), to drive United Nations development system performance for the SDGs, including by actively participating in the review and the revision of the draft system-wide evaluation policy and providing technical advice to the system-wide early lessons and evaluability assessment, as well as the system-wide evaluation of the socioeconomic response of the United Nations development system to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, UNFPA is a member of the management group of the inter-agency evaluation of the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA also supports system-wide coordination and exchange of good practices on adaptation of the evaluation functions to the COVID-19 pandemic through its participation in the UNEG working group on COVID-19 and as a member of the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, which brings together evaluation units from Member States, multilateral institutions and United Nations agencies.

In line with the United Nations Funding Compact commitment to increase accessibility of strategic evaluation results, UNFPA continues to make 100 percent of centralized evaluation reports available on the UNEG website. UNFPA also continues to significantly exceed the commitment to collaborate in at least one joint or system-wide evaluation, with 57 percent (8 out of 14) of centralized evaluations being either joint or system-wide.

## **4. Contributing to Joint SDG implementation, follow-up and review**

### ***Strengthened joint programming for COVID-19 recovery and SDG implementation***

UNFPA has continued to contribute to coordinated COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, to enable countries to build back better. Due to the continued impacts the pandemic on the ability of women, girls and adolescents to access basic services, such as health services and information, system-wide coordination through existing partnerships and mechanisms, such as gender theme

groups, sexual and reproductive health working groups and gender-based violence in emergencies sub-clusters, has continued to be effective in reaching persons in vulnerable situations.

For example, in Africa, UNFPA has partnered with United Nations system entities to provide joint technical guidance, data, analytical support and policy guidance to UNCTs to ensure rights-based and gender responsive interventions were included in national prevention, response and recovery actions that safeguarded the rights and needs of women and youth. Moreover, in response to a lack of data disaggregated by sex and gender, UNFPA has scaled up its offer to UNCTs to ensure that gender perspectives are mainstreamed across pandemic-related response and recovery indicators and data collection tools in the Arab States.

As many Member States begin to respond to the longer-term impacts of the pandemic, UNFPA has strengthened its contribution to system-wide efforts to support. Through the implementation of Cooperation Frameworks, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, UNFPA has worked with system-wide partners to scale-up programmes to rescue the SDGs. For example, through resources mobilized through the Joint SDG Fund, UNFPA is engaged in joint programmes on innovative financing solutions for the SDGs in 14 countries<sup>1</sup>. UNFPA has also increased its engagement in joint programmes across areas of climate resilient health systems and social protection in countries in all regions.

#### ***Support to system-wide reporting on contribution to SDGs***

UNFPA has contributed to system-wide reporting on the United Nations system's contribution to the SDGs, to the 2022 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment.

Results were reported based on the implementation of the Fund's strategic plan and participating in global Joint Programmes, including on eliminating child marriage and female genital mutilation. In this regard, UNFPA contributions to reducing preventable maternal deaths, averting unintended pregnancies, and integrated SRHR services were highlighted as a direct contribution to SDG 3 on good health and well-being. In addition, UNFPA contributions to prevent child marriage, educate on the harmful impacts of female genital mutilation and gender-based violence services during humanitarian crises were included as direct contributions to SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

UNFPA will continue to actively contribute to the inter-agency working group tasked with advising UNSDG Principals on a methodology for future system-wide reports on SDG support and results.

#### ***Support to the follow-up and review of the SDGs***

UNFPA continues to strengthen its support to Member States to monitor, report and follow-up on SDG implementation and to align national SDG targets with ICPD25 voluntary commitments, with a view towards building back better and accelerating SDG progress in the Decade of Action.

At the country-level, through coordinated UNCT efforts, the Fund provides support to countries conducting the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), including through statistical capacity support to National Statistical Offices, where needed, analyses and assessment of progress across select SDGs and multi stakeholder dialogue. At the regional level, UNFPA works with Regional Economic Commissions and other United Nations system entities during Regional Sustainable Development Forums.

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<sup>1</sup> Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, Botswana, Costa Rica, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Seychelles, Namibia, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia.

Globally, UNFPA works with UNDESA and other United Nations system partners in support of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) preparations, including by providing substantive contributions on the theme of the annual theme of the HLPF and to the annual SDG progress reports, as well as other preparatory processes. For example, in 2021, UNFPA worked with United Nations DESA and WHO to convene an Expert Group Meeting on the achievement of SDG 3. Additionally, in 2022, UNFPA worked with DESA and UN-Women to convene an Expert Group Meeting on progress made in the achievement of SDG 5, ahead of the HLPF.

## **5. Conclusion**

With multiple complex challenges facing the international community, it has never been more important for the system to work collectively. As articulated in the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda*, a "United Nations 2.0" is required to meet 21st century challenges. Building on the existing reforms, the work of the United Nations system must shift toward offering more integrated solutions to governments and people.

Under the overall framework of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, the Fund will work closely with United Nations system partners to implement the policy recommendations of the 2020 QCPR, within the context of the reformed United Nations development system, for the accelerated achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

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