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Update on the United Nations reform

Purpose of the document

Summary: This document reviews developments in the reform of the United Nations (UN) development system since the Governing Body's last discussion of this topic at its 335th Session (March 2019). It is a revised and updated version of the document prepared for the cancelled March 2020 session ([GB.338/INS/9](#)), which takes into account the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. It assesses the implementation by the Office of previous Governing Body decisions, giving particular attention to the status of work under the Office Plan of Action 2019–20 to maximize the opportunities of the UN development system reform for the ILO and tripartite constituents, which was endorsed by the Governing Body at its 335th Session. It highlights, inter alia, steps taken to facilitate the engagement of UN resident coordinators and UN country teams with ILO constituents at the country level in the formulation and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, in particular in respect of the Sustainable Development Goals that are relevant to the ILO's mandate. It also reviews the steps taken to ensure the linkages between Cooperation Frameworks and ILO Decent Work Country Programmes. Early experiences with the new resident coordinator system are highlighted.

Author unit: Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS).

Related documents: [GB.340/POL/6](#); [GB.340/INS/18/6](#); [GB.335/INS/10](#).

▶ Introduction

1. At the time of the last ILO Governing Body discussion on the item in March 2019, implementation of the UN reform ¹ was in an early phase, with several key governance frameworks and guidance documents under development and yet to be endorsed by the United Nations (UN) development system principals. Since then, there have been considerable efforts by the UN Development Coordination Office, the Deputy Secretary-General's transition team and the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) to provide the new resident coordinator system with the technical, operational and financial resources needed to ensure a successful transition. In May 2020, at the virtual meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its operational activities for development segment, UN Member States welcomed the progress made to date in implementing the reform, while recognizing that the COVID-19 crisis had really put the new resident coordinator system to the test, bringing the UN development system together at the country level to provide needed support to programme countries. ²
2. At the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held virtually under the auspices of ECOSOC in July 2020, it was noted that the road to socio-economic recovery from the crisis will be long and that a growing number of countries are now well off track to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. While the forum was unable to agree on a final ministerial declaration, the call for building back better and the need for global solidarity, especially for the most vulnerable nations, resonated strongly. It was recognized that the pandemic is compounding the impacts of existing crises caused by conflict, natural and other disasters, climate change and mass migration. The challenges now facing the UN development system in terms of helping countries to address a rebound in poverty and reaching those falling even further behind will loom large in the UN's development efforts for several years to come.
3. The year 2020 is the final year of the current quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), ³ which ushered in the UN development system reform. In his report to the ECOSOC operational activities for development segment, ⁴ the UN Secretary-General provided a comprehensive analysis of the first full year of reform implementation. This included several recommendations on future areas of work for Member States to consider in their negotiations for the next QCPR, which are currently under way. A UN General Assembly resolution on that item is expected by December 2020. In the resolution, Member States are expected to provide further guidance on COVID-19 recovery efforts, the restructuring of the UN development system's regional assets and multi-country resident coordinator offices, and the creation of the new system-wide

¹ See UN General Assembly, resolution 72/279, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, [A/RES/72/279](#) (2018).

² See 2020 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment [Chair's Summary](#).

³ The policies of the ECOSOC and the General Assembly for the UN development system are reviewed every four years in the context of the QCPR. The process allows the General Assembly to evaluate the UN's effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact in helping programme countries meet their sustainable development needs. The resulting General Assembly resolution guides the UN development system operational activities for development, and outlines how the system's entities should work together for the subsequent four years.

⁴ ECOSOC, [Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary-General, A/75/79-E/2020/55](#).

evaluation office. It is also expected to examine how the UN development system can support the Decade of Action to Deliver the SDGs, which was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2019, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The need for greater focus on integrated policy advice, to strengthen partnerships, including with the private sector and in South–South and triangular cooperation, to improve collaboration and encourage less-siloed funding streams across the peace, development and humanitarian nexus, and to better tailor approaches for addressing the specific vulnerabilities of different groups of countries⁵ is also likely to be highlighted. These and related issues are also discussed in the proposed ILO Development Cooperation Strategy for 2020–25.⁶

4. Implementation of the reform has proceeded well, in spite of the current COVID-19 crisis. In fact, the crisis has encouraged tighter UN development system collaboration in the both the humanitarian and socio-economic areas. The ILO was an important player in developing the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19⁷ and has actively contributed to country-level UN assessments and response plans.⁸ This has positioned the ILO as a key partner for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is leading the UN development system's COVID-19 response.⁹ It has also created many opportunities for joint proposals with the UNDP and other agencies in the context of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, in respect of which the ILO is one of the seven UN agencies, funds and programmes on the Advisory Committee.¹⁰ ILO partnerships and engagement in COVID-19 response are discussed in the Sixth Supplementary Report: ILO response to the COVID-19 crisis.¹¹
5. Part I of this document provides an update of key aspects of the reform since the last Governing Body discussion in March 2019. Part II presents some early ILO experiences with the new resident coordinator system and observations from the field; and Part III reviews the status of action items from the Office Plan of Action 2019–20 to maximize the opportunities of UN development system reform for the ILO and tripartite constituents, which was endorsed by the Governing Body at its 335th Session (March 2019).¹²

⁵ Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries.

⁶ GB.340/POL/6.

⁷ UN, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, April 2020.

⁸ As of mid-September 2020, there were 104 UN country team response plans covering 120 countries and another 29 in draft form.

⁹ The ILO and the UNDP signed a framework for action on 16 September 2020, focusing on key areas of collaboration in the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

¹⁰ These are: the ILO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, the UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, in addition to the UN Development Coordination Office and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (ex-officio). Up to five representatives of contributing partners and representatives of selected affected countries also participate.

¹¹ GB.340/INS/18/6.

¹² GB.335/INS/10.

▶ I. Developments in UN development system reform

6. During 2019 and in the early months of 2020, key guidance for the system was drawn up, notably the Management and Accountability Framework,¹³ the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) guidance¹⁴ and the business operations strategy guidance. Companion pieces to the Cooperation Framework guidance on specific topics, such as common country analysis (CCA) development, UN country team configuration, economic transformation and others were also finalized. Several other important pieces of the reform are in their final stages of development and implementation. These include the second phase of the review of the UN development system's regional assets, the review of the multi-country resident coordinator offices and the creation of an independent UN system-wide evaluation office.

Update on the Management and Accountability Framework

7. The Management and Accountability Framework sets out the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of resident coordinators and UN country teams at the country level, has been in use since March 2019 on a provisional basis and is currently undergoing a review to update it in view of experience to date. The text includes key governance aspects of the reform – such as the dual reporting line whereby country team members have two interrelated sets of accountabilities: first, to their respective entities on individual mandates; and, second, to their respective resident coordinator for results as defined in the Cooperation Framework and other inter-agency agreements of the country team. The Management and Accountability Framework calls for the resident coordinator to make a formal contribution to an agency's appraisal process of country team members as an additional reporting officer, and country team members provide input on the resident coordinator's performance. The Office has not yet implemented this provision. However, following the endorsement by the UNSDG principals of the updated Management and Accountability Framework, the Office will review the Staff Regulations and submit proposed changes to the Governing Body for discussion and approval.
8. Now that the regional review is completed, two additional chapters will be added to the Management and Accountability Framework in the coming months: one on the role and accountabilities of the UN regional entities¹⁵ vis-à-vis the resident coordinator system; and another outlining the division of roles and responsibilities between the UN development system and ECOSOC.

Cooperation Framework guidance and rollout

9. The Cooperation Frameworks are a key element of the reform and represent a significant change from the UN Development Assistance Frameworks that preceded them. Most significantly, they are high-level strategic documents that have been elevated to become the single most important planning and implementation instrument for the UN development system to help countries address national needs and priorities to achieve the SDGs. UN entity-specific country programmes should be derived from the

¹³ United Nations Sustainable Development Group, *Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System*, 2019.

¹⁴ UNSDG, *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: Internal Guidance*, 2019.

¹⁵ The UN regional economic commissions, the regional UNSDG bodies and UN development system entities.

Cooperation Framework, not vice versa. First and foremost a partnership compact between the UN and the governments of programme countries, they are developed on the basis of an independent CCA, national priorities in relation to the attainment of the SDGs and consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. It is important to note that the CCA is no longer a one-off exercise, but rather an output generated from an ongoing data collection and socio-economic analysis function of the UN country team led by the resident coordinator office.

- 10.** The Cooperation Framework guidance, which was developed through a collaborative effort from across the UN development system, was issued following endorsement by UNSDG principals in June 2019. From the Office's perspective, the guidance articulates well a number of themes of importance to ILO constituents. First, the broadened concept of partnerships, identified as critical to forging sustainable solutions, explicitly includes trade unions and employers' organizations and their engagement. Second, there is a clear anchoring of the Cooperation Framework in international standards and obligations and a human rights-based approach to development. Third, the guidance provides for an expanded configuration of the UN country team, encompassing UN entities both physically present in the country as well as those contributing remotely. Fourth, the SDG targets and indicators become the default monitoring framework to measure progress towards achievements, supported by an improved role for evaluation, including the recognition of evaluation capacity in individual entities. Lastly, the guidance provides space for normative agencies like the ILO to pursue mandated work that might not fall under the priorities of the Cooperation Framework. It gives the possibility for such agencies to develop entity-specific country programme documents with the Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional outcomes, included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities.
- 11.** Cooperation Framework processes that were already under way in 2019 were adjusted to reflect the new guidance to the extent possible, but the 16 UN country teams that started the cycle in 2020 will be the first to fully apply the new guidance. A further 35 country teams will follow in 2021. The Deputy Secretary-General of the UN has requested that all country teams have a CCA by the end of 2020. The COVID-19 crisis has evidently added a critical new dimension to this process, however. It should be noted that the rapid socio-economic impact assessments and response plans required for all countries according to the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 do not replace the CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, but will be incorporated into them.
- 12.** While experience is still limited and challenges remain to ensure a clear division of tasks among UN entities in relation to their technical expertise and mandate, UN country team members from the ILO have reported some positive early outcomes that provide interesting avenues for future replication.
- 13.** In Africa, for example, ILO advocacy in Côte d'Ivoire to both the resident coordinator and worker and employer organizations of the importance of ILO constituent engagement in the CCA and Cooperation Framework processes resulted in the ILO constituents' full recognition and involvement. These efforts facilitated the influence of the tripartite constituents in the development of the Cooperation Framework's results framework and their participation in outcome working groups. In Uganda, ILO constituents contributed to the CCA through an employment diagnostics study they prepared with the support of the ILO. They also participated in the Cooperation Framework validation workshop and provided technical inputs that were reflected in the final text signed by the Government.

14. In the Arab States, the social partners have thus far participated in the discussions on the CCA and the priority-setting process leading to the Cooperation Frameworks in Iraq and Kuwait.
15. In Asia, the social partners in India participated in the CCA and priority-setting consultations for the Cooperation Framework for 2018–22. Their contributions sharpened the focus on informal economy workers, migrant workers, state-level social protection systems and support for decent work and entrepreneurship. In Pakistan and the Philippines, the social partners regularly participate in meetings and activities under the outcome groups that the ILO leads, which has been helpful in expanding their influence within the UN country teams.
16. In Central Asia, ILO constituents in Uzbekistan actively engaged in the process of formulating the CCA and Cooperation Framework, which has proved critical in advancing the preparation of the next Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). In the Western Balkans, engagement with constituents in North Macedonia and Serbia as part of the design and finalization of the DWCPs in 2019 provided important inputs on labour and social issues that have fed into CCA and Cooperation Framework preparations. In addition, the recently finalized DWCP in Tajikistan is the result of significant capacity development investments with ILO constituents. Key elements included in the DWCP closely link to the National Development Strategy (2016–30) and will support the formulation of the next Cooperation Framework.
17. In Latin America, workers' organizations participated in the CCA validation process through Argentina's platform for the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), and a tripartite dialogue with the resident coordinator on the Cooperation Framework for 2021–25 took place in early September 2020. At the latter, constituents highlighted the importance of designing a new DWCP aligned to the Cooperation Framework, the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (Centenary Declaration) and the 2030 Agenda.

Business operations strategy and ILO engagement with the reform's efficiency agenda

18. The new guidance for UN country teams to develop a common business operations strategy was launched in October 2019. All country teams must have such a strategy by 2021. The process will encourage country teams to identify efficiency savings by reducing inter-agency duplication, leveraging collective purchasing power and maximizing economies of scale in six service lines – procurement, finance, information and communication technology, logistics, human resources and administration. Common services proposed in a country team's business operations strategy continue to be on an opt-in basis for individual agencies "considering quality assurance and cost effectiveness". To support this effort, the ILO has participated in the UNSDG Business Innovation Group's marketplace survey that attempts to identify which services UN entities purchase or would consider purchasing from others and those they could provide. As part of what is referred to as the Secretary-General's "efficiency agenda", the ILO will be required to provide the UN Development Coordination Office with annual reports on efficiency gains and effectiveness improvements. An ILO-specific framework for reporting is currently being developed.
19. One of the key enablers of the reform's goal to promote common business operations is mutual recognition of best practices regarding policies and procedures, which allows a UN entity to use or rely on another entity's policies, procedures, systems and related

operational mechanisms for the implementation of activities without further evaluation, checks or approvals. At present, 20 agencies, including the ILO, have signed the Mutual Recognition Statement.

20. Regarding common back offices, the focus will be on shifting country-level location-independent services to global shared service centres, as the level of prospective savings is deemed to be high. The Office will consider this shift on a case-by-case basis.
21. As the Office considers future participation in common back offices for location dependent services, some long-standing issues within the UN system will need to be satisfactorily addressed. Variations currently exist in the types of contracts used and grading policies among agencies, particularly in the field. For example, the ILO more strictly applies staff contract rules around the engagement of external collaborators and occupational safety and health requirements for staff than some other UN entities. The UN High-level Committee on Management is currently discussing the future of work for the UN system workforce, especially as regards its composition and management, and the Office will use this opportunity to advocate for harmonization towards better practices for decent work within the system.
22. Another enabler of common business operations with the potential to generate savings and improve inter-agency collaboration is common premises. The definition of common premises is any two agencies sharing accommodation and a target was set to increase the proportion of common premises in the UN development system as a whole to 50 per cent by 2021. The Office has issued guidance to pursue common premises as a default for all expiring leases and new offices premises, unless there is a clear business case for not doing so.

Restructuring of the UN development system in the regions and multi-country resident coordinator office enhancement

23. At the May 2020 meeting of the ECOSOC operational activities for development segment, UN Member States reviewed progress on two important pending reform items, welcoming the Secretary-General's updated proposals for restructuring the regional assets of the UN development system and strengthening the multi-country offices.
24. The regional assets of the UN development system comprise the UN regional economic commissions, the regional UNSDG bodies and the regional offices of UN development system entities. The review of these assets examined the respective roles and relationships and the gaps and overlaps in support of the new resident coordinator system and highlighted the many regional and transboundary issues that influence countries' SDG achievement. Given the specificities of each region, ECOSOC members have called for a region-by-region approach in providing options for restructuring and reprofiling, emphasizing that changes should not affect the existing mandates of any UN development system entity that operates at the regional level, nor duplicate or undermine the work done by the UN regional economic commissions.¹⁶ This approach has proceeded along two tracks, one undertaken by an inter-agency internal review team chaired by the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Reforms and another based on intergovernmental consultations.
25. The internal review team took the lead in developing proposals to create regional collaborative platforms to absorb the existing coordination mechanisms of the regional

¹⁶ See 2020 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment [Chair's Summary](#).

economic commissions and regional UNSDG bodies. The Office played an active role in the work of this team in New York and as member of working groups in the individual regions, keeping in mind the need to avoid creating duplicate structures and greater reporting burdens as well as the need to ensure that the standing of ILO statistical work at the regional level is recognized and maintained.

26. Regional working groups made region-specific proposals on creating regional knowledge hubs to pool expertise; enhancing results-based management and system-wide reporting; consolidating existing capacities on data and statistics; and the potential efficiency gains in administrative services through common back offices or co-location, where feasible. The regions have also created or expanded regional issue-based coalitions led by UN entities and the regional economic commissions, which include partners outside the UN. These focus on themes of mutual concern or with cross-border implications and their impact at the regional and subregional levels. The ILO is co-chairing several regional issue-based coalitions. For example, it co-leads coalitions on equitable growth in Latin America with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the UNDP; on harnessing demographic dividends, gender and youth for development in Africa with the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization; and on inclusion and empowerment in Asia and the Pacific with the United Nations Children's Fund.
27. The review of the multi-country resident coordinator offices was a response to long-standing concerns of small island developing States and smaller least developed countries about the level of support and UN presence in the 41 countries covered by multi-country resident coordinator offices. As the review took shape over the past two years, concerned countries had an important role to play in the consultations. At the ECOSOC operational activities for development segment in July 2020, Member States welcomed the proposal to open a new multi-country office in the North Pacific, re-profile and tailor resident coordinator job descriptions for multi-country offices and redirect some resources to these offices to provide dedicated focus to individual countries covered by them. The Office's contribution highlighted the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team structure and the ILO's experience in South-South cooperation as potential models for providing technical support to countries in the multi-country office clusters.

Creation of an independent system-wide evaluation office

28. The ILO was an important contributor to the UN Evaluation Group's development of a UN development system-wide evaluation policy, which supports the Secretary-General's efforts under the reform to provide the UN development system with an independent system-wide evaluation function that contributes to greater accountability and collective learning. While some questions remain about the hosting and funding of a small office to support this function, UN development system entities consider it essential for improving coordination across their evaluation offices and ensuring the independence, impartiality and quality control of both Cooperation Framework evaluations and system-wide evaluations at the global level. This new function will complement, not replace, existing evaluation mechanisms within UN-agencies and global-level bodies such as the Joint Inspection Unit, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the UN Evaluation Group. The ILO's Evaluation Office has also been active through the UN Evaluation Group in supporting COVID-19 evaluation initiatives and coalitions and the development of evaluability guidance for new Cooperation Frameworks. It will continue to be active in

these forums in line with the evaluation policy to strengthen the role of evaluation in ILO and system-wide initiatives to implement the Decent Work Agenda.

Funding of the resident coordinator system

29. While considerable progress has been made in establishing the new resident coordinator system, some questions about the long-term sustainability of the voluntary funding arrangement of the system remain. In the current environment of extremely tight budgets and subdued funding prospects, UN Member States continue to focus their attention on potential efficiency savings and are eager to see evidence that these are materializing. However, early efficiency savings are not yielding readily available funds for resident coordinator system. Also, the receipts from the imposition of the 1 per cent levy on earmarked funding to agencies will fall below early projections. The UN Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General continue to rally existing and new donors to provide the needed funds for the system, and 39 countries have now contributed. However, for 2020, a budget gap of approximately US\$73 million remains on the original budget of US\$281 million. The cost-sharing formula for UN agency contributions is currently under review and consultation within the UNSDG but it will not change until 2021. A more comprehensive review of a hybrid funding model for the resident coordinator system will take place in 2021.
30. The ILO also continues to make good progress in fulfilling the actions requested of UN entities as part of the Funding Compact between UN Member States and the UNSDG agreed in early 2019. For example, the Office is working to increase transparency in ILO results and finance by making use of the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard and the data standards for UN system-wide reporting of financial data. It has increased joint programme interventions funded by large ILO development cooperation contributors, global and country-level multi-partner trust funds and inter-agency operational partnerships. It has also made expenditures, disaggregated by SDG, available on the ILO's donor dashboard, signed the Mutual Recognition Statement, improved donor visibility and increased the number of joint thematic and project evaluations. Structured dialogues with ILO funding partners on multi-year, un-earmarked or lightly earmarked funding will build on the ILO's experience with agreements under the Regular Budget Supplementary Account and provide the Office with strategic and flexible support. It should also be noted that the ILO's proposed Programme and Budget for 2022–23 will incorporate Funding Compact indicators.

▶ II. Challenges and emerging good practices

31. With the reformed resident coordinator and UN country team system now in place, ILO field staff have been doing their utmost to make the reform work for the Organization, in spite of occasional difficulties adjusting to the new arrangements. Reports from the field, including during a global meeting of ILO office directors in January 2020, have highlighted both challenges and emerging good practices.
32. Proactive outreach to resident coordinators, including briefings and efforts to involve them in meetings and consultations with ILO constituents, has been beneficial in all regions. For example, the ILO and the regional resident coordinators in Latin America and the Caribbean held a two-day dialogue in Lima in September 2019, which helped to improve the understanding and recognition of the ILO's mandate and tripartite governance structure, the role of its constituents and the new UN architecture in the

region. Subsequent resident coordinator briefings by the ILO regional director have helped to consolidate this understanding and recognition. Resident coordinators have also opened the doors for the ILO to ministries of finance and planning in the Caribbean, Namibia and Zambia, helping the ILO to access new funding streams. There is clear potential for working with resident coordinator offices on communications to amplify the ILO's human-centred focus and policy messaging, with examples from Turkey and the Arab States in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, including in relation to access of refugees to the labour market in Lebanon, and from Indonesia.

- 33.** A number of recent examples highlight successful relationships with resident coordinators and resident coordinator offices in the context of COVID-19 responses. In the Arab States, the ILO closely engaged with the resident coordinators in developing evidence-based policy messages on the impact of the pandemic on the labour markets and in shaping response interventions that promote more inclusive social protection frameworks, support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, call for the upscaling of labour-intensive interventions, and promote occupational health and safety. As has been the case in many regions, rapid assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable workers were carried out in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon in coordination with other UN and international agencies and in close coordination with the resident coordinator offices.
- 34.** In Central Asia, notably in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, close collaboration with resident coordinators has resulted in the formulation of inter-agency proposals focusing on labour and social issues for submission to the second call for proposals of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Similar engagement with resident coordinators has resulted in collaborative initiatives to support the socio-economic response to the COVID-19 crisis in North Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine.
- 35.** In Zimbabwe, the resident coordinator engaged with workers and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare during a UN inter-agency cross-pillar mission on COVID-19 response to explore possible collaboration. In Uganda, ILO support to constituents to undertake an impact assessment of COVID-19 on the labour sector attracted the attention of the resident coordinator, who contributed the support of one of her economists to interface with the Ministry of Labour to provide technical backstopping.
- 36.** Having the right expertise in the right places at the right time remains a critical issue for reinforcing ILO leadership in key areas of its mandate, labour statistics in particular. The Office is looking for ways to be more innovative and agile in delivering in this regard. Along with a skills mapping and forecasting exercise already foreseen as follow-up to the Centenary Declaration, the Office will also review existing human resources and administrative policies to identify ways to provide capacity on a short-term basis for developing CCAs or for other needs.
- 37.** Work in the area of partnerships and resource mobilization is an ongoing concern as competition for resources among agencies remains an issue. Resident coordinators are now leading the coordination of country-level funding based on Cooperation Frameworks, including with the private sector and multi-bilateral funding partners with country-level allocations and decision-making. Experience with the Joint SDG Fund's first call for bids from UN country teams on social protection showed that, while ILO bids with other agencies were often successful, transaction costs could be quite high relative to the amounts received and that many agencies wanted to take part, which created additional tensions. Nonetheless, some found participation important for leveraging subsequent partnerships and funding proposals to bilateral partners.

38. The important strides the Office has made in delivering as “One ILO” is positioning the ILO well in the new working environment. Large-scale comprehensive programmes involving multiple ILO departments and offices, such as the inter-agency Dutch-funded Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities, are allowing the ILO to overcome its relatively small size compared to other agencies and to work effectively, especially in countries where it is a non-resident agency. The diversity inherent in the approach fosters innovation and reinforces the ILO in promising areas of work, for example in the peace, development and humanitarian nexus. However, such opportunities require that the ILO be strategic in the investment of its resources and focus on delivery of results that lead to measurable impact.

▶ III. Status of work under the ILO plan of action

39. At its 335th Session (March 2019), the Governing Body endorsed the Office’s plan of action on UN development system reform. The following section and the appendix provide an update on the actions taken so far under the three components of the plan.

A. Developing the capacity of national constituents to engage in Cooperation Framework and SDG processes

40. During 2019 and 2020, both the Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV) developed briefing materials and carried out training activities tailored to the specific needs of the social partners. In collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre), ACT/EMP developed a training programme on the SDGs aimed at employer and business membership organizations. The programme includes sessions on the 2030 Agenda and the business case for engaging in SDG implementation, how to link employer and business membership organizations’ advocacy work and business priorities to the SDGs, and UN reform and engagement with the UN development system at the country level. The training programme was launched in the Asia and the Pacific region in July 2019 and has been adapted for delivery in other regions, notably in the Southern African Development Community region in November 2020. In the future, the programme will be supported by online material.
41. The training materials and training workshops developed and launched by ACTRAV have strengthened the capacities of trade unions to participate and to exercise their influence in the different UN-supported national processes with a view to achieving the SDGs at all levels, especially on voluntary national review reporting and the engagement in national SDG processes. As a result, trade unions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Namibia, the Philippines, Somalia and Zimbabwe, among others, requested ACTRAV technical support to better engage with resident coordinators and UN country teams or participate in the CCA and Cooperation Framework processes. ACTRAV will continue to work on such capacity development to help trade unions bring decent work, employment and fundamental principles and rights at work to the forefront of these processes and discussions.
42. ILO regional offices have also developed specific technical training for constituents at both the national and the subregional levels to enable them to introduce decent work perspectives and priorities in national Cooperation Frameworks, voluntary national reviews and other strategic national development processes. In Europe and Central Asia,

constituents participating in results-based management workshops for DWCP planning also learned how these must now be linked to Cooperation Frameworks. In the Arab States region, regional South–South and triangular cooperation workshops for tripartite constituents created a platform for knowledge-sharing and exchanges of experience between countries with specific regard to the preparation of voluntary national reviews. In addition, national information sessions were organized for the social partners on UN reform, its implementation and the role of the social partners in Cooperation Frameworks. In Latin America, the Regional Office has prepared training materials for employers’ and workers’ organizations tailored to their specific needs in the region, focusing on enabling them to actively engage in the Cooperation Framework development processes. In Africa, constituents in Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda were recently briefed on aligning Decent Work Country Programmes with Cooperation Frameworks using the new ILO guidance documents.

43. At the global level, the course Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is delivered to tripartite constituents by the Turin Centre in collaboration with the ILO, was revised to integrate UN reform issues.

B. Maximizing the opportunities of UN reform to promote tripartism and support Member States in achieving decent work

44. The reform impacts a number of ILO internal policies and processes and to this end updated guidance was sent to field offices in October 2019. The Office has also prepared guidance to support ILO staff working on DWCPs in the context of the Cooperation Framework formulation, including how to derive DWCPs from the Cooperation Framework and ensure ILO constituents’ active engagement in the process. The Office has developed a normative stocktaking tool for briefing resident coordinators on a country’s status concerning the ratification and application of standards, which will also facilitate the engagement of the social partners in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks.
45. To support ILO staff in taking better advantage of pooled funding mechanisms and joint funding opportunities, the Development Cooperation Learning Journey on partnerships and resource mobilization organized by Partnerships and Field Support Department and the Turin Centre includes a focus on partnership development in the UN reform environment. Tailored support has also been provided to an increasing number of staff in ILO field offices engaged in joint programmes. The Office continues to engage with the UNSDG task team on private sector engagement, including follow-up on the UN Common Approach to Due Diligence for Private Sector Partnerships.

C. Advancing the Office’s operational integration with the UN at the country level

46. Mutual recognition of agency rules and systems is complex to implement; however, it is a first step towards greater integration within the UN. The Office will seek to advance this integration where possible and appropriate in the country context. Many of the easy wins in finance, procurement and human resources (joint vacancy notices, training) have been applied for some time. For other areas, such as enterprise resource planning systems, ILO staff contracts and information technology, determining the feasibility, costs and benefits will take longer. To this end, the Office has provided guidance to staff to clarify the concepts and the ILO’s positioning.
47. In 2019, the Office revised the job descriptions for field office directors to ensure their responsiveness to the needs arising from the UN reform. With a view to increasing the

number of resident coordinators coming from the ILO as an additional means of increasing the influence and understanding of the ILO and its mandate within the UN at the country level, the Office has developed a new programme and coaching protocol to prepare ILO officials for the assessment centre, which is part of the selection process to become a resident coordinator. The ILO is also a member of the task team led by the UN Development Coordination Office to develop induction training for resident coordinators.

▶ Appendix

Status of the Office Plan of Action 2019–20 to maximize the opportunities of the UN development system reform for the ILO and tripartite constituents

Action item	Due by	Status
Component 1: Developing the capacity of national constituents to engage in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and SDG processes for greater influence in UN-supported national development for achievement of the SDGs		
1. In collaboration with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, development of awareness-raising and training materials on working with the UN	By end 2019	Completed/ongoing
2. Continued targeted technical training and Office support for constituent representatives to better enable them to contribute decent work perspectives and priorities in national Cooperation Framework, voluntary national review and other strategic national development processes	2019–20	Ongoing
Component 2: Maximizing the opportunities of UN reform to promote tripartism and support Member States in achieving decent work		
3. Revision and update of DWCP guidance to align it with the Cooperation Framework process	By end 2019	Completed
4. Development of awareness-raising, training and information resources for ILO field and headquarters staff on working within the reformed UN at the country level to promote the ILO mandate and engagement of constituents	By end 2019	Ongoing
5. Training and support for ILO staff in field offices on pooled funding mechanisms to better equip them to take advantage of joint funding opportunities	2019–20	Ongoing
6. Preparation of training modules and information resources for resident coordinators in collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO	By end 2019	Starting 2020

Action item	Due by	Status
7. Review of the configuration of ILO technical capacities and expertise in programming, resource mobilization and partnership building to maximize contributions in view of new Cooperation Frameworks and resident coordinator system arrangements (based on the Plan of Action 2019 towards the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25)	By mid-2020	Starting 2020
8. Assessments of how the UN Common Approach to Due Diligence for Private Sector Partnerships can be followed by the ILO, and of further opportunities and possible roles in the UN-wide due diligence approach, in particular regarding the labour principles and the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work	By October 2019	Ongoing
Component 3: Advancing the Office's operational integration with the UN at the country level with respect for ILO values		
9. Strategy to advance mutual recognition as a means to promote further integration in common services	By end 2019	Ongoing
10. Review and revision of ILO Country Director job descriptions	By end March 2019	Completed
11. Internal consultation on changes to the performance management system and Staff Regulations	By end 2019	Starting 2020 following the revision and UNSDG endorsement of the Management and Accountability Framework
12. Reinforcement of the ILO's preparatory development programme for ILO officials interested in the resident coordinator selection process	By mid-2019	Ongoing
