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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**Repositioning of the United Nations development system**

**Information update**

Note by the Secretariat

**Repositioning of the UN Development System at the Regional Level  
- Implementation and Next Steps in Europe and Central Asia -**

**A. Overall approach of implementing regional UNDS repositioning**

1. Building on the well-established practice of UN cooperation in Europe and Central Asia, the regional UN system has taken an inclusive approach with broad engagement by Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) and other UN entities to achieve progress on the regional reform agenda.

2. In his report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system, the Secretary-General identified five key areas of transformation and proposed related actions:

- Creation of UN Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) as unified mechanism for coordination in each region (Recommendation 1)
- Establishment of regional knowledge management hubs (Recommendation 2)
- Enhancing transparency and results-based management at the regional level (Recommendation 3)
- Consolidation of data and statistical capacities at the regional level (Recommendation 4)
- Provision of administrative services to regional offices through common back offices (Recommendation 5)

3. While the modalities of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (Recommendation 1) are defined at the global level, the regional UN system has been working to adapt the region-specific recommendations 2-5 to the specific context and institutional landscape in Europe and Central Asia. To this end, a Regional Task Team for Europe and Central Asia was established in September 2019, co-chaired by the UNECE Executive Secretary and Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, and the UNDP Regional Director and Chair of the Regional UN Sustainable Development Group Team, with strong support from the Regional UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) for Europe and Central Asia. Focal points from across the regional UN system have participated in the discussions, reflecting a high level of engagement and inclusion.

4. The general preference of the task team across the recommendations was to develop solutions that build on existing structures, in particular the Issue-based Coalitions (IBCs), that are based on a sound understanding of the users and their needs, and that avoid heavy mechanisms and additional layers of coordination and reporting. Linkages and synergies between the different recommendations should also be sought. Moreover, best practices, standards and guidance from further global and interregional coordination of implementation efforts are also taken into account.

## B. Implementation of SG recommendations 1-5

### **Recommendation 1: Transition to the Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia (RCP-ECA)**

5. Pending final intergovernmental agreement on the regional architecture, the regional UN system in Europe and Central Asia with its already existing and well-functioning integrated platform for UN cooperation is in the process of transitioning to the RCP-ECA in 2020.

6. In the future, the annual high-level meeting of the RCP-ECA will be held back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region. The RCP-ECA will be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG). The UNECE Executive Secretary and the UNDP Regional Director for Europe and the CIS will serve as Co-Vice-Chairs. DCO, jointly with the Co-Vice-Chairs and in close consultation with all RCP-ECA members, is accountable for ensuring the preparation of the annual RCP-ECA work programme and the meeting agendas. The RCP-ECA secretariat will be organized jointly by DCO and the offices of the Co-Vice-Chairs, UNECE and UNDP, in line with the final report of the Internal Review Team.

7. A second annual meeting in autumn each year will be held to coordinate operational and practical issues. The operational meeting will be chaired by the Co-Vice-Chairs.

### **Recommendation 2: Regional knowledge management hubs**

8. A web-based guide, located on the website of regional UN cooperation in Europe and Central Asia<sup>a</sup>, will be created in 2020 providing main entry points, contact information and flagship products of the regional UN system by major policy area. The regional IBCs will initially be used as the backbone for the web-based guide. Other priority issues could be added gradually.

9. A review of all IBCs is ongoing to determine, *inter alia*, how to provide access to the knowledge products of the IBCs and their members and how to guide users to IBC expertise/experts for policy advice and support in SDG acceleration.

10. In certain cases, internal or external experts may be required to help absorb, interpret and apply the knowledge available at the regional level. The availability of UN staff for such tasks will be by consent of his or her UN entity.

11. The hub should be based on the existing digital repositories and libraries of the regional UN system entities, an initial mapping of which has been carried out<sup>b</sup>. Double entry of information should be avoided. Eventually, a digital interface that harvests information from existing regional platforms could be considered.

<sup>a</sup> Available at: [www.unece.org/runcwelcome/un-cooperation-in-the-unece-region.html](http://www.unece.org/runcwelcome/un-cooperation-in-the-unece-region.html)

<sup>b</sup> Selected examples are:

- FAO Regional Office Resources: <http://www.fao.org/europe/resources/en/>

- UNEP Knowledge Repository (Search Term Europe): [http://apps.unep.org/repository/publications-search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=Europe&=Apply](http://apps.unep.org/repository/publications-search?search_api_views_fulltext=Europe&=Apply)

12. The hub has to align with the needs of clients, in particular the Resident Coordinators, their offices and the UN Country Teams. An in-depth assessment of these clients' needs, e.g. through selected interviews and a survey, is planned and will help shape the further design of the hub.

13. A data and statistics dimension will also be included. UNECE is setting up a regional platform on statistics for SDGs, with three components<sup>c</sup>: a Knowledge Hub on Statistics for SDGs, launched in December 2019, a Dashboard of SDG Indicators, launched in March 2020, and a Database of SDG Indicators.

14. The purpose of the statistical platform is to communicate developments on measuring SDGs in the UNECE region, provide easy and quick access to up-to-date indicators on implementing SDGs, and disseminate data and metadata. The Knowledge Hub on Statistics and the database would primarily appeal to statisticians and others interested in methodologies, comparability of indicators, and analyses. The dashboard would provide an easy way for the public and policymakers to see where their country stands in the region with respect SDG implementation. The dashboard and database rely on data from the global SDG database.

15. Based on the above initial steps, the regional knowledge management hub is being created and has to be maintained within existing regular and extra-budgetary resources. Some pooling of existing resources within the regional UN system may be considered to ensure swift progress.

### **Recommendation 3: Transparency and results-based management at the regional level**

16. The first results-based report of the UN system at the regional level will be prepared for 2020 and submitted to the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in 2021. It will be closely aligned with the annual regional SDG progress report, to be prepared pursuant to a request of the Commission to the secretariat<sup>d</sup>.

17. The system-wide regional report will focus exclusively on the results of joint initiatives and actions at the regional level, avoiding duplication with reporting by UNCTs at country level and reporting by individual agencies at different levels.

18. The reports of the IBCs on results and support modalities should be at the core of the system-wide regional report. The ToRs of the existing IBCs are being reviewed to explore whether a contribution to the regional results-based report could be integrated.

19. The regional, subregional and transboundary aspects of Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and collaboration on regional intergovernmental processes, such as the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region and the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the International Conference on Population and Development, will also be integrated into the system-wide regional report.

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<sup>c</sup> Knowledge Hub on Statistics for SDGs: <https://w3.unece.org/sdghub/>

Dashboard of SDG indicators: <https://w3.unece.org/sdg>

<sup>d</sup> Economic Commission for Europe, 68<sup>th</sup> session, 9-10 April 2019, E/2019/37-E/ECE/1488, Decision B (68), paragraph 6.

#### **Recommendation 4: Consolidation of statistical capacities at the regional level**

20. To respond to this recommendation, the existing IBC on SDG Data and Monitoring was reconfigured into a Regional UN Coordination Group on Data and Statistics. In January 2020, this Group agreed on its ToRs. It will be co-chaired by UNECE and UNEP, meet quarterly, and report annually to the Conference of European Statisticians.

21. The work of the group will be demand-driven at the request of member States, through RCs and UNCTs. It will support improving the national collection, analysis, and dissemination of accurate, reliable and comparable data, disaggregated towards better monitoring of national policies and priorities, including those related to the SDGs.

#### **Recommendation 5: Common back offices**

22. The implementation of common back offices (CBO) and co-location of regional offices, where feasible, aim to lower management cost and enhance the harmonization of processes and the quality of services provided in support of programme implementation at the regional level.

23. The CBO concept at the country-level has been finalized by the Business Innovation Group (BIG) with a target to implement CBO in all countries by 2022. Currently, under DCO coordination, a number of projects under the Secretary General's efficiency agenda are being scaled up globally, including the work on regional efficiencies under recommendation 5 of the regional UNDP reform and the Common Back Office (CBO) project.

24. Even though evidence gathered initially by the BIG did not support a business case for consolidation of location independent back office functions at the regional level in Europe and Central Asia, the R-UNSDG is currently establishing a Regional Operations Management Team to engage, in close collaboration with the regional DCO office, in further assessments and the roll out of the recommendation 5 of the regional review and the CBO project.

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