



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1 April 2021

Excellency,

I wish to thank you for your engagement and leadership in transforming the United Nations development system to better support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I am writing to update you on the upcoming review of the functioning of the reinvigorated United Nations Resident Coordinator system and seek your continued engagement as it unfolds in the coming months.

As you will recall, in endorsing the reforms of the United Nations development system in General Assembly resolution 72/279 in May 2018, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General “*to submit for the consideration of the General Assembly, before the end of its seventy-fifth session, a review with recommendations on the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding arrangement*”. This review represents a critical milestone in the establishment of a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, which lies at the heart of the new generation of United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) and our ability to support countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As the reformed Resident Coordinator system enters its third year, it has been consistently well evaluated by Member States, agency surveys and other independent assessments. Yet, the review in 2021 will represent the first comprehensive, formal review of the new Resident Coordinator system. It is an opportunity to take stock of progress in establishing a stronger and more impartial leadership, greater coordination, more efficient and effective joint delivery, and enhanced system-wide performance and accountability in support of the 2030 Agenda. The Resident Coordinator system review is also an occasion to identify areas where course correction may be needed for our coordination function to deliver fully on the ambition of the General Assembly.

All Permanent Representatives of Members States  
and Permanent Observers  
to the United Nations  
New York

We are taking steps to ensure that our review report is issued for the consideration of the General Assembly by early June 2021. The modalities of the related intergovernmental process will be established by the President of the General Assembly, with whom I have also initiated consultations and remain grateful for his leadership and guidance in this regard.

### **Key issues that the review will address**

The review and its recommendations will address key issues related to the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system. This will include the performance of the new Resident Coordinator system since its inception in ensuring more cohesive and effective support for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda; the backstopping capacities of the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the Resident Coordinator Offices; incentives and accountabilities between Resident Coordinators and UNCT members and the regional and global levels; and ensuring sustainability of the funding of the Resident Coordinator system.

The review will be guided by the provisions of resolution 72/279, with the mandates relevant to the Resident Coordinator system serving as the benchmarks to evaluate our performance. The review will remain strongly anchored on our main objective: strengthening the ability of the United Nations development system to support countries to accelerate action towards the Sustainable Development Goals. This is the ultimate test for the new Resident Coordinator system. I am also determined to ensure a transparent and evidence-based review, relying on compelling data, especially from independent sources; with the regular engagement of Member States and entities of the United Nations development system.

### **Preparations for the review**

I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to coordinate the preparations of the review process on my behalf, including the drafting of the report. A team of internal advisers – including my Special Adviser on Reforms – will support the preparations of the report, analysing the findings of data emerging from surveys, evaluations and commissioned research and undertaking outreach to the United Nations system and to Member States, as required.

### **Consultations and intergovernmental consideration**

As we move ahead, I count on your country's leadership and your personal engagement. A robust informal consultation process will be launched this month, akin to the process that unfolded in 2017 ahead of the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. It will include a series of informal briefings in plenary by the Deputy Secretary-General and I, supplemented with meetings of regional groups, and cross-regional smaller interactions as needed. Outreach will also be made to the Executive Boards of entities, including outside of New York, to ensure inputs from Specialized Agencies. This will precede and complement the formal intergovernmental process to consider any findings and recommendations emanating from the review.

Internally, we are taking steps to ensure an intense consultative process with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), in an effort to facilitate strong inter-agency inputs and ownership of the review process. With the support of the DCO, a mechanism to engage Resident Coordinators and UNCTs throughout the review will also be established – both to ensure that their views and feedback are factored into the review, but also to ensure that national counterparts and partners are kept abreast before the report is issued in June.

The Resident Coordinator system review will be preceded by the two formal reports to the Economic and Social Council (Operational Activities Segment) – the annual Secretary-General’s report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which will provide a comprehensive update on all development reform mandates; and the report on the DCO by the Chair of the UNSDG, which covers the annual activities of the DCO and the Resident Coordinator system at large. Both reports are due in April 2021. We will ensure coherence and complementarity between these reports and the report on the review of the Resident Coordinator system, while fully respecting the differences in scope and mandates.

#### **A unique opportunity**

This review presents a unique opportunity to consolidate the work we began in 2017, under your leadership, on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Three years into the reform, we have a joint responsibility to ensure that this review provides additional impetus for the United Nations development system to support countries in their effort to recover better from the pandemic and deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

I look forward to proceeding on our transformative journey, with our eyes on 2030 and with the same ambition and commitment that has marked the repositioning process to date.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

*with my warmest personal regards*



António Guterres