



CEB common principles to guide the UN system's support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

As the overarching framework for action for the coming 15 years, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an ambitious agenda for change. It is universal, rights-based and integrated, and its implementation calls for, similarly, a much more transformative and collective engagement by all stakeholders – governments, parliaments, the scientific and academic community, civil society, the private sector, the international community and the United Nations system.

The UN system supports a universal agenda that commits all countries to sustainable development, building on a set of existing normative frameworks and well-established review, follow-up and support mechanisms. The UN system will contribute towards a model of collaborative efficiency and pursue an integrated and coordinated approach to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – through multi-sectoral and cross-institutional approaches; in diverse country settings; across development/humanitarian/human rights/peace and security pillars; through greater linkages between normative and operational aspects of the UN system's work; through vertical integration between national, subnational, regional and global levels; through collaborative and integrated business solutions and a global workforce; and in the way UN Country Teams operate together.

The UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) sets forth the following common principles to guide the UN system's support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

1. **Country-led, Country-owned, Evidence-based and Results-focused Approaches:** Results must remain the driving force for the UN system's support to national governments and partners for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Country needs and national capacity will determine the support the UN system will provide, underpinned by robust and collaborative approaches on data and risk-informed joint analysis.
2. **People-centered, Rights-based and Leaving No One Behind:** Protecting human rights and the dignity of each individual, strengthening governance and the rule of law, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, addressing inequality, leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first will be at the heart of the UN system's efforts to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
3. **The Whole of the System is Greater than the Sum of its Parts:** The 2030 Agenda demands a UN system where each part – normative and operational; resident and non-resident; programmatic and support – contributes its specialized expertise, skills and assets towards a shared goal in a coherent and complementary manner. In an enhanced culture of collaboration, each entity will contribute according to its strengths across the 17 indivisible goals in a transparent and accountable way to deliver shared UN results in support of Member States at global, regional and country levels. Joint work should be prioritized where it has greatest impact with due appreciation of agency mandates and expertise and with mutual recognition of respective contributions.

4. **Financing-for-Purpose:** The indivisible and interconnected nature of the SDGs reinforces the need for multi-partner financing that can be used as unifier and catalyst for UN collaborative action, drive integrated approaches that bridge the normative and the operational and transcend different pillars, and encourage cross-sectoral responses. As part of a broader portfolio of financing instruments, the UN system will promote greater use of inter-agency pooled funding mechanisms to complement agency-specific arrangements to ensure that the UN is financed for purpose.
5. **Prevention and Peace as a Shared Purpose:** Preventing and resolving crises, addressing root causes, managing risk, building resilience and sustaining peace are shared objectives of the entire UN system. UN system actions will be guided by joined-up and risk-informed analysis and planning, with crisis prevention at its core, while ensuring respect to the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian and human rights law.
6. **Leveraging Partnerships:** The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires broad-based multi-stakeholder coalitions and inclusive and participatory approaches by which communities, civil society and the private sector actively and systematically participate in the process of promoting sustainable development and sustaining peace. The UN system will work more proactively with partners at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels to capitalize on synergies for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
7. **Innovation, Experimentation and Data:** The UN system will collectively create space for innovation and experimentation, utilizing cutting-edge technology and data as appropriate, to explore new opportunities and tailored solutions based on changing environments and country needs. It will take a strategic, cross-cutting, system-wide approach to utilizing technology to facilitate joint analysis and decision-making. This requires strengthened UN data capacity and investments in disaggregated data availability and knowledge sharing.
8. **Transparency and Accountability:** The UN system entities, individually and collectively, will hold themselves to the highest level of accountability to those they serve, including the most vulnerable and marginalized. The UN system will actively support higher standards of transparency and accountability based on authoritative international standards and robust monitoring of agreed indicators, with open data platforms, shared budget and finance information, and communicating results together.
9. **Effective Service Delivery:** Global and integrated service delivery approaches and policy platforms for joint and more efficient service provision will enable the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They will provide value for money and lower administrative costs and support integrated programmatic action, transparency and accountability for results and impact.
10. **Global UN System Workforce and Transformative Leadership:** The UN system will continue to develop a high-performing, diverse workforce that exhibits a “One UN” mindset and is increasingly cross-disciplinary, mobile, comfortable working across UN pillars and skilled in leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships. A transformative, collaborative leadership model for both headquarters- and field-based leaders will accelerate this change. It will connect leaders to knowledge, drawing on leadership innovations and providing the tools to better tackle multidimensional challenges.
11. **Duty of Care:** The organizations of the UN System will preserve and foster the health and wellbeing as well as safety and security of their staff – while remaining committed to stay and respond to the ever-increasing demand for their services, despite the often deteriorating conditions in which those services are being delivered.

Areas for further work to take forward the common principles

The conversations within the CEB High-Level Committees on the draft common principles have been rich and stimulating. Members of the Committees provided feedback on the principles and also more broadly commented on steps that could be taken towards realizing the principles, once endorsed. This addendum captures some of the forward-looking suggestions that could be advanced within the Committees, other inter-agency coordination mechanisms and individual UN system organizations, as appropriate.

- **Work in unity while preserving diversity.** The UN system’s diversity and vast range of specialized expertise was a source of great strength and an invaluable asset. It was stressed that an integrated agenda does not necessarily have to imply integrated institutions/structures or that “everybody does everything”. To ensure “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts” it would be essential to draw on the expertise that resides within the various organizations in a manner that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness while avoiding duplication and fragmentation. It was also recognized that maintaining coherence required an active and ongoing effort with clear accountability for system-wide results, and consequently a suggestion was made that a lead / coordinating entity (or entities) for each of the sustainable development goals could be designated to ensure that the UN system response to the 2030 Agenda remained coherent.
- **Move to “operational clarity”.** After endorsement of the principles, the UN system would need to move quickly and decisively from conceptual agreement to operational clarity. To do so it would be necessary to elaborate or further unpack the meaning and implications of each principle and translate them into policies and guidance upon which organizations could act. Much work is ongoing within the Committees and needs to be further advanced – such as UNDG efforts related to the next generation of Delivering as One; implementing the standard operating procedures; mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support; and the new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks – that would support the operationalization of the common principles.
- **Articulate and communicate a shared view of success.** Several agencies acknowledged the magnitude of change implied by the principles. Institutions, individually and collectively, would need to take concerted action to effect the necessary changes in attitude and behaviour required to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a truly universal and integrated manner. It could be helpful to articulate what the successful implementation of each of the common principles would look like and disseminate this widely throughout the organizations so that all UN system staff had a shared understanding of what they were working toward.
- **Examine the concept of universality and the practical implications.** One of the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda was its universal nature. When considering how to operationalize the principles, more work would be needed to reach a shared understanding of the concept of universality and to internalize the policy, operational, and managerial implications for the UN system in order to embed a universal approach in its work. UNDG had already taken steps to examine the implications of universality specifically for the work of the UN Development System, and this could be built upon and expanded to broader and other contexts.
- **Deepen work on risk and prevention.** Risk management, crisis prevention and resilience-building were closely interlinked and essential to achieving sustainable development. As underscored during the CEB’s November 2015 retreat, which had been informed by discussions that had taken place within HLCP, addressing risk, prevention and resilience as a shared goal should be at the core of the UN system effort to promote greater integration of peace, humanitarian, development and human rights work. More work would be needed to further enhance policy coherence in this area across the system, in close coordination with complementary work in other relevant expert-level mechanisms.

- **Take forward efforts to support the data revolution.** The United Nations system had a vital role in supporting the production of disaggregated data to ensure no one was left behind, contributing to improving quality of data and promoting use of science-based projections to inform risk analysis. Organizations stressed the need to continue to advance work to facilitate sharing of data sets among agencies and enable wider data exchange, including through the initiatives being carried out under the aegis of the CEB in support of the data revolution. The opportunity within the system to achieve some efficiencies and to refine analysis, especially with access to disaggregated data, was highlighted.
- **Continue work towards integrated business solutions and operational infrastructure.** Discussion in the Committees acknowledged that there was much to be gained from collaboration in the delivery of administrative services and operational support. HLCM and UNDG have been advancing efforts to expand existing initiatives and identify new opportunities to generate efficiencies and improve service delivery through harmonization and joint work. Discussions and leadership commitment are needed to continue these efforts among UN system entities with a shared understanding of the opportunities and agreements on further implementation.
- **Review partnership modalities.** Discussions in the Committees pointed to the need for more work in order to maximize the power of partnerships in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Governance, implementation, reporting and accountability arrangements should be reviewed to determine if they need to be updated to reflect current realities. In view of the holistic approach to sustainable development, it was also suggested that partnership efforts that had originated in separate intergovernmental processes could be brought closer together in support of the integrated agenda to improve coherence and generate synergies.
- **Strengthen UNS accountability in support of sustainable development.** A suitable system-wide accountability framework was key to achieving results together. To fulfil the common principle on transparency and accountability in support of sustainable development, discussions within all three Committees pointed to the need to identify what accountability mechanisms, indicators and international standards would be applied so that all organizations would have clarity on expectations. Roles and responsibilities of parties contributing to joint work on the 2030 Agenda would need to be clearly defined.
- **Guide the realization of the CEB common principles.** With respect to the common principles as high-level guidance to the system, it was suggested that further discussion would be helpful on how the CEB could best steer the UN system towards the principles' realization. They might benefit from some light indicators to monitor progress in their operationalization.