Assessing the roll-out of the UN regional reform

June, 2021
In 2021, Cepei, with support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, undertook to assess the United Nations Development System’s (UNDS) regional reform roll-out. In addition to analyzing UN documents and reports, Cepei conducted three (virtual) experts meetings, consulted the regional Agencies Funds and Programs (AFPs) offices and Regional Commissions (RCs), and interviewed UN Staff, member states, civil society, academia, and think tanks in the five regions.

This document presents the findings on three aspects of the inquiry:

I. How each of the regions interpreted the Secretary-General’s mandate;

II. What each region has implemented thus far in terms of the Regional Collaborative Platforms, Issue Based Coalitions, and Knowledge Management Hubs;

III. The outputs that have resulted from the reform roll-out thus far.

Due to the disruptions of COVID-19, documentation of the regional reform roll-out is limited. However, by aggregating the available information in this document, the hope is to enable the UN system and its external stakeholders to take inventory of the progress made thus far and identify opportunities going forward.
How has Africa interpreted the SG’s mandate?

The African region interpreted the SG’s 5 recommendations holistically. In Africa’s inception report on the reform and restructuring of regional assets, Africa called for a dynamic relationship between the RCP and regional forum for sustainable development to enable not only a demand-driven approach, but also accountability (Recommendation 3). The RCP reports its progress to the forum, and through its participation in the forum, generates a better sense of the major issues that affect different sets of stakeholders. The RCP defines its priorities accordingly.

The Africa region interpreted the SGs mandate such that the OIBCs should be demand-driven—informed by regional priorities. While the regional forum for sustainable development is one vehicle for the RCP/OIBCs to connect to non-UN stakeholders including nongovernmental orgs, civil society, etc., the region agreed that the first stage of the reform roll-out should concentrate on improving internal collaboration, before incorporating the external collaboration component of the mandate. As one interviewee noted, the Africa region does not think of itself as a “UN-only ecosystem,” in part because Africa’s unique political, institutional, and policy landscape makes it impossible to think of such an isolated system.

As far as the thematic focus of the RCP and OIBCs, unlike other regional RCPs, in which the reference point is agenda 2030, the African
RCP uses both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. The African region interpreted from the SG’s mandate that the OIBS should be time bound, however, after deliberations, it was decided that some of the “existential problems” that the region faces could not be reduced to 1 or 2 year initiatives or work streams. It was agreed that the OIBCs would be given more time to operate while big flagship initiatives would be time bound.

What has Africa implemented? What outputs have resulted thus far?

Regional Collaborative Platform

• As stated in one report, “The Africa region engaged the DSG at the margins of the ARFSD 2020 with 7 OIBCs co-conveners and members framing and defining their vision statements and scope of work, narrowing the choice of flagship initiatives to be followed by the design of work plans with deliverables and measures of success. Building on guidance and direction provided by the DSG, the UNDS convened a Virtual Retreat on 12 May 2020 to take forward the work of the Africa Regional Task Team in implementing the Secretary General’s Recommendations 2 – 5 and progress made by the O/IBCs. The O/IBCs and Task force teams have updated their results statements and work plans launched into implementation including their flagship initiatives under the leadership of the co–conveners. The work of the OIBCs and Task Force teams would contribute to the drafting of the regional UNDS work programme for the 2020-2021.”

• In the spirit of SG-Recommendation 3 (enhanced transparency and results-based management), Africa created a regional task team and an inter-agency Task Force to support the OIBCs in framing results frameworks:

  » “The Membership of the Task Team has been defined, including from AFPs (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNECA, UNESCO) with, vision and scope, TORs defined and leadership co-conveners UNFPA and ECA, identified. Task team quality assurance role for OIBCs is underway.”

  » “In Africa, the Task Force on Recommendation 3 formulated specific terms of reference (ToRs) for its work and a Template to guide the OIBCs formulate results statements in line with the SG’s expectations. Based on the template, all the terms of reference of the O/IBCs were framed with results statements that

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2. Ibid. at pg. 8.
3. Ibid.
put a lens on accountability of results. The Task Force on Recommendation 3 was tasked by the May 2020 Retreat to continue to work with the O/IBCs with the view to providing technical assistance in strengthening the result frameworks.” 4

- The entire architecture of the African RCP was designed in a manner that facilitated collaboration with the AU. The messaging is that in every OIBC and flagship initiative, the African region must identify and prioritize collaboration with the African Union, and identify which particular commissioners in the African Union Commission they should be partnering with.

- The African RCP has also embedded accountability mechanisms for collaboration with the African Union. It was defined that the annual meetings of the RCP Africa, should include a specific annual African Union/RCP meeting in which to examine how the entities are collaborating together on the critical areas – the agreed priorities for Africa. In addition, under the UN/AU development cooperation framework, the SG and the chairperson of the African union meet twice a year. The RCP will provide information for the SG and chairperson to evaluate the level of collaboration between the AU and UN in the framework of the development cooperation framework.

- The RCP has initiated a conversation with the African Union, with a view to organizing concrete programs and areas of work which would involve the AU's direct participation.

- The transition to the RCP was described as smooth in Africa, due to the fact that the region already had a strong foundation for collaboration (e.g., the RCM had defined clusters which facilitated inter-agency collaboration around African Union priorities).

- One interviewee noted that there was some resistance at first to DCO becoming the focal point for the region (replacing other regional directors). Regional directors were implored to support and enable DCO by helping them to better understand each entities’ individual and collective assets (the Knowledge Management Hub and developing rosters of expertise is seen as one way to support DCO). In addition, the African region implored the principals leading the AFPs to speak the RCP language, and to give very clear instructions to the regional directors to promote collaboration.

- Despite initial resistance, it was noted that the RCP joint secretariat is now operating well, meeting every week, and rotating the chairing and management of meetings to ensure total ownership.

- UNECA has also assumed a leadership/accountability role in terms of ensuring that the regional level has system-wide coherence (as part of its contribution to the joint secretariat). UNECA is monitoring the degree of UN system wide coherence within UNECA itself to make sure all of the layers and regional offices are taking seriously the RCP and OIBCs. UNECA also monitors for failures in terms of collaboration between the UNCTs and AFPs.

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4. Ibid.
Regional Collaborative Platform - Africa Region

Chair: DSG
Vice Chairs: ECA & UNDP

Joint RCP Secretariat: DCO, ECA & UNDP

TF co-conveners:

TF2 on KM: ECA / ILO
TF3 on Reporting: ECA / UNFPA
TF5 on efficiencies: IOM WCA/ECA

1. Strengthened integrated data and statistical systems for sustainable development Co-convened by UNFP & ECA.

2. Ensuring effective and efficient macroeconomic management & accelerated inclusive, economic transformation and diversification Co-convened by UNCTAD & ECA.

3. Harnessing demographic dividends, gender and youth for development Co-convened by UNFPA, ILO, UNESCO, WHO & IOM.

4. Leveraging new technologies and enabling digital transformations for inclusive growth and development Co-convened by WHO, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, ITU.

5. Fostering action on climate change, strengthening natural resources governance resilience and enabling energy transitions for sustainable development Co-convened by FAO, UNESCO, UNDP & UNEP.

6. Towards peace, security, and the respect of human rights Co-convened by UNODC, OHCHR, UNHCR, IOM, UNOAU & UNDP.

7. Displacement and migration Co-convened by UNHCR, ILO & IOM

**Issue Based Coalitions**

The Africa region has created 7 OIBCs (They call them: Opportunities/Issue Based Coalitions).  

1. Strengthened integrated data & statistical systems for sustainable development

2. Ensuring effective and efficient macro-economic management and accelerated inclusive, economic transformation and diversification

3. Harnessing demographic dividends through investments in youth and women’s empowerment for sustainable development

4. Leveraging new technologies and enabling digital transitions for inclusive growth and development

5. Fostering climate action and resilience


7. Forced displacement and migration

- The OIBS are framed as “the main vehicle for collaborative delivery under the Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP). The O/IBCs aim to engender lasting and transformational change and ensure effective linkages between regional, sub-regional and national dimensions, including regional and sub-regional integration and transboundary actions.”  
  
As of September 25, 2020, the OIBCs has “progressed with flagship programmes” and “work plans [we]re being finalized while implementation [was] at different stages.”

- All the OIBCs and flagship initiatives are aligned with the priorities of the African Union, and the clusters that inform the regional cooperation mechanism (RCM – AU/UN platform).

- The RCP explicitly defined that the co-convenors of the OIBCs must be regional directors. If regional directors delegated the role, they would still be held accountable for anything that could arise from the OIBC.

- There are discussions on creating an 8th OIBC to take sole responsibility for sub-regional initiatives. How to operationalize OIBC 8 is still the subject of further review. The focus is currently on maturing OIBCs 1-7, especially in terms of back office reporting, and consolidating data and statistics.

- **The Africa region’s progress on OIBCs is documented as follows:**

(A) Strategic collaboration with African Union Commission in 4 areas:

- Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of the AFCFTA (free trade agreement)

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7. Ibid.

Regional Pharmaceutical Pooled Procurement/African Medical Supplies Platform

» Advocacy on Implementation of UN Convention against Corruption and Common UN position against corruptions in Africa

» The Futures Report: Making the AFCFTA Work for Women and Youth

(B) Strategic support/interventions in response to COVID-19: 9

• The Africa Knowledge Management Hub on Covid-19

• Plethora of strategic policy briefs and studies on Covid-19

• Debt management, restructuring due to Covid

• Innovative approaches toward distance teaching/learning and continuity of vital services

» During Covid-19, an interviewee described that OIBC 1 played an instrumental role in facilitating collaboration toward establishing the Covid-19 regional knowledge platform (hub).

(C) Strategic interventions linked to SDGs and process mechanisms 10

• Africa UN data gateway

• Africa UN data and statistics strategy

• Mapping of key policy interventions to speed up progress toward SDG 8

• Foundational documents developed and agreed [TOCs, TORs, RFs, WPs, CNs, TOs, Log Frames, WPs, Mapping, Working Groups developed; Mapping; guidelines & FP systems]

• Africa’s OIBCs have also defined 2021 priorities. See below.

1. Strengthened integrated data & statistical systems for sustainable development: 11

• Contribution: helping other institutions (NSSs) with their own change management (digital transformation); capacity development programs; implementation of data and statistics strategy

• 2021 Priorities:

» (1) Robust Online SDG Platform: develop system requirements, content, including identifying data producers, users, hosting institution, resource requirements, etc.; scanning the landscape of existing online data platforms at regional and continental levels; stocktaking of statistical activities undertaken by all UN agencies in Africa

» (2) Transforming NSSs: modernization of NSSs through digital transformation; design and deliver a ONE UN National Statistical Capacity Development Programme; Data and statistics advocacy strategy including identification of a champion and data ambassadors

» (3) Promoting the culture of data use: strategy and guidelines

» (4) Implementation of the Africa UN Data and Statistics Strategy

9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
2. Ensuring effective and efficient macro-economic management and accelerated inclusive, economic transformation and diversification: ¹²

• **Contribution:** policy contributions

• **2021 Priorities:**

  » (1) *Effective implementation of the AfCFTA by member States:* Finalization of the outstanding issues for Phase I negotiations on rules of origin and tariff liberalization and regulatory frameworks in TIS; Support Phase II negotiations on investment, Intellectual property rights, competition policy; Leveraging AfCFTA for industrial development in Africa and supporting value chain development

  » (2) *Supporting African countries on sustainable financing and debt management:* Supporting African countries in designing Illicit Financial Flow policy and regulatory framework; joint capacity support on developing equitable resource allocation formulae, expenditure tracking and efficiency resource allocation and use; policy guide and capacity support to countries to improve long-term debt management capacity, governance, and transparency

3. Harnessing demographic dividends through investments in youth and women’s empowerment for sustainable development ¹³

• **Contribution:** strategy; delivering a mobile app to help connect at risk populations to resources and services

• **2021 Priorities:**

  » (1) *Demographic Dividends and Health:* Strategic joint assessments, advocacy and capacity development exercises undertaken for ensuring continuity of life-saving SRMNCAH services; Smartphone application to equip adolescents and young people most at risk of unintended pregnancies and GBC with skills and access to health, protection and legal services

  » (2) *Education:* Inclusive Education Strategy based on GEM Report 2020; Life skills teaching and learning packages for integration in skills development for in and out of school adolescents; country level capacities and public private partnership developed and built to roll out foundational literacy and numeracy and Digital Learning Strategies to build back better education systems

4. Leveraging new technologies and enabling digital transitions for inclusive growth and development ¹⁴

• **2021 Priorities:**

  » (1) *Home grown sustainable and scalable technologies and digital solutions:* Guidelines on establishing an enabling environment for innovation; joint awareness raising/advocacy on entrepreneurship in the digital economy and the role of open science and scientific research to build the requisite capacity to respond to emergencies

  » (2) *Infrastructure to facilitate implementation of emerging technologies and digital solutions:* Guidance/tools for assessing infrastructure needs shared with all countries; Guidelines for promoting

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¹². Ibid.
¹³. Ibid.
¹⁴. Ibid.
smart sustainable cities, including template roadmap to support countries in crafting their national roadmaps

5. Fostering climate action and resilience: 15

• 2021 Priorities:

  » (1) **Water-Energy-Food Nexus:** The Pan-Africa Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for increased Resilience; The UN Integrated Strategy for Sahel; Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework

  » (2) **Sustainable Management and Restoration of Natural Capital, and Building Climate and Disaster Resilience:** Africa Blue Economy strategy; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI)

One interviewee noted that UNECA is currently conducting a pilot project in Gabon, together with UNDP, UNEP and the UNCT in Gabon which, if successful, will be taken to the OIBC to scale to other countries. The premise is that OIBC 5 is preparing to engage in critical work to mobilize action toward getting ecological services (e.g., Congo basic) monetized, using bargaining tools to promote more green and blue bonds, and developing the capacity of NSSs in order to be able to do the natural capital accounting.

One interviewee cited efforts to localize the renewable energy value chain in the African region as another collaborative effort with internal and external stakeholders that is about to ramp up under OIBC 5 in July 2021.


• **Example of partnership with the African Union**

• 2021 priorities:

  » (1) **Support to AU, RECs/Regional Mechanisms and member States on conflict prevention, including Preventing Violent Extremism:** Assessment of capacities and capabilities at AU, REC/RM and MS level with relevance to both regional issues and country level support; tailored and coordinated capacity support; monitoring and reporting to support strategic advocacy on the role of human rights violations in driving violent extremism and terrorism

  » (2) **Improved compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law:** Joint research on the role of human rights protection in prevention of conflicts; support to AU on development of Conduct and Discipline Policies for peace support operations personnel and development of a Training Curriculum and Facilitators Guide on the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework

7. Forced displacement and migration: 17

• *it seems the first areas refer to programs/action items, but not sure how the work is organized or deployed*

• 2021 Priorities:

  » (1) **Promotion of human rights-based approaches meeting the rights and needs of Forcibly Displaced and Migrant Population in Africa:** mainstreaming and domestication of international standards on labour migration into national and

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15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
regional laws; supporting establishment of sound and workable screening measures at borders; enhanced access to justice for migrant and forcibly displaced populations

» (2) Joint UN responses advancing labour mobility and socio-economic integration of Forcibly Displaced and Migrant Populations: technical advisory services to support ratification, adoption/implementation of free circulation/movement regimes and regional analysis of GRF pledges of the Global Compact on Refugees prepared and widely disseminated.

» (3) Increased access of forcibly displaced and migrant populations in Africa to Education, Health, Social Safety, Small Scale Enterprise and Skills Training: Joint UN support to initiatives aimed at establishing a “Regional Qualifications” Framework.

Knowledge Management Platform

- The Africa Regional Knowledge Management Hub was initially part of the OIBC 1 (Strengthened integrated data & statistical systems for sustainable development) but by September 2020, it had been separated into its own cross-cutting, standalone Task Force. 18

- The status is documented as follows:

  » “The Task Force 2 now covers solely Africa Regional KM hub which aims to be a one-stop shop hosting multi-sectoral data, publications, learning resources, and a roster of experts. It aims to serve as a connector across governments, UN agencies, private sector, CSOs, academia.

  » The envisaged knowledge management hub will help to identify, select, organize, disseminate and transfer important information/knowledge and expertise scattered across the system. Potentially, this will facilitate quick response/deployment to specific national member States’ requests in support of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, among other functions.

  » The African UN Knowledge Management Hub for COVID-19 (Covid19 KM Hub) - https://knowledge.uneca.org/covid19/ has been developed within the context of the Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP), under the Task Team of Recommendation No. #2 of the UN reforms, led by the UNECA and ILO as Co-conveners. It is a one-stop-shop on information, data and resources relevant to the pandemic in Africa. The Hub harnesses information and resources from credible sources, including WHO, regional UN agencies, Ministries of Health of African governments and credible news channels amongst others. The Task Team is to also deliver on the implementation of an Africa Regional Knowledge Management Hub.

  » The Task Force has developed its 2020-2021 work plan and started implementation including the roster of experts for the region.” 19


19. Ibid.
How has the Arab States region interpreted the SG’s mandate?

The Arab States/Western Asia RCP is framed as “...a crucial mechanism to support countries in the region to achieve the SDGs. The platforms channel regional expertise, know-how, resources, data, networks and logistics to provide timely and coordinated analytical, policy and operational support for countries and Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams on the ground.”

The RCP is also framed as “...a responsive and agile one-stop-show that connects the

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resources, talents and knowledge of the UN system in the region to Member States, leveraging the country presence of Resident Coordinators’ Offices and UN country teams, to support countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” (Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and Vice-Chair of the Arab States RCP.) 21 The RCP platform is described as offering regional support to Member States, DCs and UNCTs but not other stakeholders. 22

Regional Collaborative Platform 23

• The Arab States RCP comprises 30 UN entities in the Arab region – they use the “deliver as one” mantra. 24

• As of September 25, 2020, the RCP draft work plan had been initiated. 25

• In the spirit of SG-Recommendation 3 (enhanced transparency and results-based management), the Arab States have created a Regional Task Force:

  » “The aim of the Task Force is to consolidate reporting at the regional level, to demonstrate results of the UN System regionally—including trans-boundary programmes, Issue-Based Coalitions and regional SDG progress, and to ensure there is no duplication of country-level reporting.

  » The Task Force has developed a process for Report writing. Agencies will provide input, ESCWA and DCO (regional) will be consolidating inputs.

  » Regional Directors will approve the outline and process. The reporting process will include Agencies and IBCs to provide various inputs, ESCWA & DCO will consolidate and share for final comments. Final product is to be presented to ECOSOC at HLPF.

24. Ibid.
### Issue Based Coalitions

- **Migration** (IOM, ESCWA, ILO)
- **Urbanization** (UN Habitat, UNEP)
- **Humanitarian Development Nexus** (IOM, UNDP)
- **Food Security, Climate Action and the Environment** (FAO, UNEP)
- **Climate Action, Natural Resource Sustainability** (UNEP, ESCWA)
- **Water, Food Security and Nutrition** (FAO, UEP, UNESCO)
- **Gender Justice and Equality** (UNFPA, UN-WOMEN)
- **Youth empowerment and inclusion** (UNFPA, UNICEF)
- **Macro-economic Management and Social Protection** (ESCWA, UNDP)
- **Economic Management, FFD, Trade, Debt** (ESCWA, UNIDO, UNDP)
- **Social Protection** (ILO, UNICEF)
- **Quality Social Services and Community Resilience** (WHO, UNESCO)

### Programmatic and Operational Effectiveness

- **Peer Support Group**
  (Chaired by DCO Regional Director)
- **Regional Operational Management Team**
  (Chaired by UNDP, ESCWA)
- **Regional Working Group on Data and Statistics**
  (Chaired by ESCWA, UNFPA)

**Source:** “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).”
See: [http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf](http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf)
Issue Based Coalitions

The Arab States region has created 8 IBCs: 26

1. **Migration** (conveners – IOM, ESCWA, ILO)

2. **Urbanization** (conveners – Habitat, UNEP)

3. **Humanitarian/Development Nexus** (conveners – IOM, UNDP)

4. **Food Security, Climate Action and Environment** (conveners UNEP, FAO)

   » **Climate Action and Energy Efficiency** (conveners UNEP, ESCWA)

   » **Water, Food Security and Nutrition** (conveners FAO, WFP, UNESCO)

5. **Adolescents and youth empowerment inclusion** (conveners UNFPA, UNICEF)

6. **Gender justice and equality** (conveners UNFPA, UN Women)

7. **Macro-economic management and social protection** (conveners WSWA, UNDP)

   » **Economic management FFD, Trade, Debt** (conveners ESCWA, UNIDO, UNDP)

   » **Social Protection** (conveners ILO, UNICEF)

8. **Quality Social Services and Community Resilience** (conveners WHO, UNESCO)

   » **Health and wellbeing** (conveners WHO, UNFPA)

   » **Education and Technology** (conveners UNESCO, ITU)

In addition, there will be a group on:

» **Data and statistics** (ESCWA, UNFPA)

» **Regional OMT** (UNDP, ESCWA)

» **Peer Support Group** (DCO)

- It is described that: “All IBCs have prepared their 2020 work plans and updated them to reflect COVID-19 activities. Most IBCs have also prepared TORs. IBCs are fully functioning and implementing their work plan. On 24 September, an RCP meeting was held to assess progress on implementation of IBC work plans.” 27

- In addition and RCP meeting took place in early October 2020. The intention was “[...] to discuss the advanced status of the roll-out of the RCP and review these IBCs to ensure they are aligned with the needs of the region, expectations of the regional review and confirm the de-facto integration of legacy structures into the RCP.” 28

26. Ibid at pg. 2.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid at pg. 2-3.
Knowledge Platforms

The Arab region has established the most sophisticated Knowledge Management platform of all regions. “Manara,” as it is named, is documented as follows: “MANARA is intended to be a one-stop-shop for all knowledge and data that is available from UN sources, Member States and other development actors in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It is intended to serve and will be accessible to RCOs, UNCTs, and Member States and will include several tools that will be made available in Arabic and in English:”

1. “Arab SDG Gateway, featuring: 1) An interactive SDG monitoring tool to assess progress on SDG implementation at the regional and national levels with regional and country SDG profiles; 2) a comprehensive SDG data portal; 3) Specific LNOB data dashboards; 4) E-handbook on SDG metadata; 5) Finance for development section; 6) SDG knowledge and learning material; 7) Calendar of SDG events; and 8) repository of evidence based policy material (see screenshot below)”

2. “A comprehensive platform for data and statistics reflecting the Arab region based on nationally sourced data and data from the UN custodian agencies. This data will be further complemented by estimates (nowcasting) for the most recent time periods and data based on non-conventional data sources – big data. Currently this data platform comprises over 1.5 million data points forming over 160 thousand time-series. The content is quickly expanding, currently the section on “Leaving No-One Behind” is close to release. Other sections provide data and statistics on SDGs, economic indicators, social indicators, and the environment. The interface and statistical metadata are fully accessible in both Arabic and English and link a multitude of data sources from UN entities, national statistics office and other credible sources providing consolidated data collections. It further provides users with broad data search capability and data management capabilities which will be publicly available. This platform has already dedicated data spaces for individual countries across all of the above mentioned data domains, in an attempt to assist UN county teams and Resident Coordinator Offices in their work – linking the data and statistics at the national level and the regional level, and making it consistent with data and statistics published by the global headquarters of the UN and the UN custodian agencies. Several UNCTs used this data in the Common Country Analysis and in SDG reporting.”

3. “A set of knowledge products including:
   - Intelligent search engine tailored for the needs of governments and UN staff that can analyze and catalogue millions of documents and provide tailored reports to users, in particular, RCs, UN country teams (all UN staff) and Public Officials;
   - A document filter and ranking application (ISTISHARA) capable of ranking documents

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
against the SDGs, UN resolutions and national development plans or other large collection of reference documents); Over 20 UN entities and the OECD have expressed interest in receiving this tool for their use. This will be very useful for RCs and UNCTs to support the alignment of SDGs with national plans;

- An Assessment Building Wizard to support users in development tools for assessment/surveys and analysis of data using the latest education and game theory tools.

- An e-publishing wizard (bot Arabic and English) which will be embedded in the main application to allow those using the search engine to collect information based on pre-established document formats and thus aid drafting process (intended particularly to support RCs, UN staff and civil servants in their drafting needs) and produce their documents online while using the most advanced facilities for editing and document sharing;

- A Mind-map Wizard which will allow users to build transformational maps based on relationships of concept or ideas.” 32

4. “A regional UNDS e-learning platform on development issues including public policy in Arabic/English targeting civil servants, RCs, UN staff, and also available to the public in general. Courses are being developed in partnership with UNSSC, UNITAR, University of Michigan, ICLEI, UNCTAD, OECD and other partners. They will be offered free of charge when possible;” 33

5. “Comprehensive experts’ roster that can guide RCOs/UNCTs to existing UN regional capacities that can be tapped to support the preparation of the CCA/UNSDCFs and other needs;” 34

6. “A common UNDS online GIS mapping support service to support other functions of MANARA;” 35

7. “A set of policy simulation tools based on various economic models, including CGE models, that can help users in assessing the impact of various policies on various segments of the population and different sectors of the economy.” 36

32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
Asia Pacific

How has the Asia Pacific region interpreted the SG's mandate?

UNESCAP describes the regional contribution as mainly comprising research and analysis, policy advisory services, capacity building, and technical assistance. 37 Efforts to deepen regional cooperation and integration aim to advance: connectivity, financial cooperation, market integration. 38

What has the Asia Pacific region implemented? What outputs have resulted thus far?

RCP

Asia Pacific established its RCP in October 2020. The structure includes 5 IBCs and working groups and a Regional Operations Management Team (facilitates business ops coordination) 39 As of September 25, 2020, a work plan had not been developed, but the structure below had been delineated: 40

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37. Ibid.
In the spirit of SG-Recommendation 3 (enhanced transparency and results-based management), a dedicated working group has been established, led by ESCAP and DCO (other members include UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, UN Women, UNFPA, FAO, etc.) to consolidate reporting at the regional level, to demonstrate results of the UN System regionally – including trans-boundary programmes, Issue-Based Coalitions and regional SDG progress. Consensus and agreement that the report will NOT duplicate country-level reporting, thus it will not be a compilation of country aggregate results and achievements.”  

Asia Pacific (but perhaps through ESCAP) also has examples of engagement with regional and subregional fora, regional organizations and other stakeholders:  

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41. See pg. 9: Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf

» Strengthening engagement with ASEAN by adopting “ASEAN-UN Plan of Action for 2021-2025” (at 11th ASEAN-UN Summit-history of partnership/coordination since 2011) – the plan of action was created by coordinating with internal UN stakeholders.

» Collaboration with the Pacific Community to develop protocols for delivering essential services during the pandemic, technical advice on public health measures; UNICEF helped Pacific Community procure essential supplies. Etc

» Implemented a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

» Facilitated censuses and household surveys

» Developed work plans for support of young children and families: establishes multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms that support the alignment of national priorities, plans and policies. 43

• Asia Pacific also has examples of Region-Region coordination: UNESCAP and UNECE worked in partnership with RCs and UNCTs to strengthen cooperation of countries in Central Asia. 44

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**Issue Based Coalitions**

The Asia Pacific region has created 5 IBCs: 45

1. **Climate change mitigation and Air Pollution**, co-chaired by ESCAP and UNEP.

2. **Climate change adaptation and building resilience**, co-chaired by UNDP and UNDRR.

3. **Inclusion and empowerment**, 44

4. **Human mobility and Urbanisation**, 44

5. **Human rights and Gender Equality**, 44

• UNESCAP frames the IBC’s role as “bringing together the expertise and resources across the regional entities of the UN to provide coordinated support to RCs, UNCTs, and member states.” (6) (does not mention other stakeholders)

• The IBCs each have UN entities co-leading them, defined objectives, and participation and contribution from a number of other UN agencies [but not external stakeholders, it seems] (6).

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45. See: [https://knowledge.unasiapacific.org/regional-architecture/issue-based-coalitions](https://knowledge.unasiapacific.org/regional-architecture/issue-based-coalitions)
• It seems the work of each IBC is divided into dedicated working groups or work streams, which focus on specific objectives. Each IBC has a “joint annual work plan and deliverables”

• On March 24, 2020, it seems that all IBCs were represented at the AP Regional Directors meeting chaired by the DSG. They are described as “Fully operational and well advanced in the start-up phase.” 46

• It is also stated that “DCO facilitated an inter-IBC meeting to support synergies, information sharing, and joint collaboration on common themes.” 47

» **An example of synergies:** the Co-chairs of IBCs 1 and 2 will develop joint work-streams on NDCs, Green Economy and climate risk.

The IBCs developed work plans in 2020 specifically for COVID. Overall UNESCAP claims that the IBCs have enabled more gender-responsive and human-rights centered COVID-19 assessments and response plans; they have facilitated new regional dialogues around climate and data for SDGs; and policy recommendations. In addition to coordinating dialogues with groups of RCs, UNESCAP lists that the regional level has executed joint actions on the ground including: forging consensus among governments to strengthen social, education, and health services during pandemic; closing the digital divide; mobilizing pandemic volunteers; strengthening data and statistics. 48 The following progress has been documented on the IBCs in Asia Pacific:

1. **Climate change mitigation and Air Pollution, co-chaired by ESCAP and UNEP.** 49

• The IBC has 15 agencies as members.

• There are three workstreams:

  » air pollution to meet WHO 2030 guideline targets

  » raising the ambition on NDCs

  » accelerating phasing out of coal in AP.

• Work Plans have been developed focusing on upstream policy work, UNCT support on CCAs/CFs, dialogues with governments (Thailand, India and Indonesia) on better supporting investment in renewable energy industries as fossil fuel subsidies, particularly coal remain high etc.

• Outputs, in general terms, include: (1) providing technical assistance to countries, developing knowledge products (policy guidebook); (2) online events, analysis/field research, literacy materials; (3) publications, fundraising to phase out fossil fuel. There is mention of having held discussions with some external stakeholders, including forming an expert panel. 50

47. Ibid. at 4.
2. Climate change adaptation and building resilience, co-chaired by UNDP and UNDRR.\textsuperscript{51}

- The IBC has 16 agencies as members.
- The IBC has three workstreams, which “came from the gap identified in the mapping exercises and analysis from the conversations with all RCs as well as some work-plan of members”:
  - Enhancing understanding of disaster and climate related risks (ESCAP, UNEP, UNDRR);
  - Recovery and Build Back Better (UNDP, FAO, UNDRR) and
  - Reducing negative impact of disaster climate related displacement (IOM, OHCHR, UNDRR).
- In general terms, outputs include:
  - knowledge products for collecting and using data, financing arrangements multi-stakeholder partnerships
  - rolling out guidance notes in countries
  - organized forums: Regional Peer Support Group (seems for UN staff), Covid webinar; a Virtual Regional Exchange (including government reps);
  - organized virtual discussions between RCs;
  - established a joint work system
  - worked with ASEAN sectoral bodies on developing and implementing guidelines;
  - UNDP and UNODRR helped 29 countries develop national disaster loss databases; technical support.\textsuperscript{52}

- Key outputs include:\textsuperscript{53}
  - produced \textit{Guidance Note on Integrating DRR and Climate Change Adaptation in CCA and Cooperation Frameworks}.\textsuperscript{54} Orientation was provided to members and PSG. In October, an orientation session will be organized for RCs and UNCTs and a customizable training package ready to be offered globally to UNCTs through GETI;
  - \textit{The UNDP-led study on Lessons Learned from past disasters for COVID-19 socio-economic recovery}. A comms strategy is currently being developed to share with UNCTs in partnership with DCO.

3. Inclusion and empowerment, co-chaired by ILO and UNICEF.\textsuperscript{55}

- Social protection is the key focus for the group. A policy brief was launched on Regional Analysis on Social Protection Measures Implemented by Countries in Response to COVID-19 last month where RCs and UNCTs attended.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} See pg. 3: “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf
\textsuperscript{55} See pg. 3: “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf
• The IBC has a “Regional Cash Working Group” co-chaired by Red Cross (external entity), which has facilitated knowledge exchange, and joint training with another working group; defined national and regional actions to enhance implementation of social protection and are helping countries and UNCTs implement the action plan (through the IBCs and RCs). identifying structural gaps in program design and delivery; worked in partnership with external entity (Cambridge Education) to document best practices for continuing education during covid. 56

» Working Group on Education 2030+

conducted an inclusive regional review of progress toward education agenda (included national surveys and collection of case studies, expert reviews, sub-regional consultations, but does not seem to have included civil society/other stakeholders.); also conducted an online consultation of Member States, partners and key stakeholders [who?] or progress toward Goal 4 produced “regional online knowledge portal” (11); a number of UN entities under this group helped governments support safe school reopening and operations during Covid (by facilitating knowledge exchange of best practices)

» Smart Villages: establishing digital village platforms – integrated and flexible solutions for the provision of connectivity and digital services might evolve into partnership with World Bank to upscale this 57

4. Human mobility and Urbanisation, co-chaired by IOM and UN-Habitat. 58

• Focus is on enhancing the exchange of practices, lessons learnt from different countries, and working on a study on regional/sub-regional migration under the impacts of COVID-19, with a focus on LNOB.

• The IBC is engaging in external partnerships with academic institutions to conduct joint research. 59

5. Human rights and Gender Equality. 60

• The group has 16 members

• co-chaired by OHCHR, UNFPA and UN Women.

• Key results to date include:

» putting together a knowledge management portal that is accessible by RCs/UNCTs;

» GE and HR checklist and guidance for RCs/UNCTs to better mainstream work on SEIRP and other strategic documents;

» roster of experts drawn from the IBC to support MPTF call.

• An example of providing support to the country level: UNCT in Malaysia offered a suggestion to the IBC, which led it to create a guidance/tool and resource repository to help inform socioeconomic response plans to Covid-19. The IBC [led by UN WOMEN] conducted the region’s first e-training for UNCTs on Gender Equality Marker and its


58. Ibid.


60. Ibid. at 5
application to proposals to the UN Covid-19 trust fund and UN INFO platform. The UNCT then helped Indonesia roll out the markers, which gave them better visibility and ability to track investments in gender equality and women empowerment; social media campaign; supported three UN country teams with capacity-building activities (trainings and briefings on gender and HR); created summary guidance targeted toward UN personnel, media professionals, and civil society organizations (shared webinars); data collection; collaborated with YouthLEAD and the Y-PEER Asia Pacific Center to update report on policies; collaborated with Planned Parenthood to conduct regional review of sexuality education.

» Financing: Women’s Livelihood Bond Series: first ever multi country gender bond series listed on a stock exchange (2020 - $27.7 million in private capital were raised) – help support 180000 women and women entrepreneurs recover from Covid

» Partnerships (UN and external chambers of commerce and industry*) to deliver training programs and web portal designed to help women entrepreneurs in South Asia use e-commerce and digital marketing for their SMEs

Knowledge Platforms

“Building on an existing joint agency knowledge hub (SDG Helpdesk which has a link to the SDG Data Gateway) hosted by ESCAP and involving a number of agencies (FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, DCO, ESCAP, UN Women etc.), work [was] undertaken to expand this to a hub wholly owned by the system and meeting the demands for knowledge. To accelerate progress UNICEF, UNDRR, OHCHR and ESCAP have contributed resources ($30k out of $37k that was budgeted for until 31 December 2020) to have dedicated staff working on it - at least part-time and for the system start-up.”

In October 2020, the Asia Pacific Regional Knowledge Management Hub launched.

- The Asia Pacific region frames it as follows: “The Knowledge Hub facilitates universal


63. See pg. 7: Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf

access of countries and United Nations country teams to knowledge resources, communities of practice and expertise across the United Nations development system.” (2)

- There is ongoing work on harmonization of common elements and operating principles [of knowledge resources] with other regions.  

- They have a national SDG Tracker (customizable data dashboard) looks like a promising tool

- Also made progress on creating a consolidated data product (the SDG Gateway) of data on progress towards SDGs at regional level.  

- The regional level created an additional working group on SDG Data and Statistics, which seems to be set up for broad stakeholder engagement. The working group established regular contact and information flows with 24 UNCTs. It is stated that this allowed for flexible and rapid response and info sharing between regional and national level.  

  » The Working Group provided technical support to RCs and National Statistics Offices during Covid and launched “Asia-Pacific Stats Café” webinar series: a forum to connect UN entities and National Statistics Offices – the topics are tailored to country priorities and requests for assistance (4); general in-depth tech discussions, engaging wide statistical community (including junior and mid-level staff that otherwise wouldn’t be able to access face to face events); 25 cafes in 2020 with over 3000 participants.

66. Ibid. pg. 4.
67. Ibid. pg. 17.
68. Ibid. pg. 4.
Europe & Central Asia

How has Europe interpreted the SG's mandate?

As one interviewee described, the European region always considered itself the model region. Prior to the SG’s recommendations, Europe did not have separate RCM and UNDG meetings but, rather, joint UN system meetings. The European region also had IBCs, which served as a model for the current SG mandate, although they each had different levels of ambition and activity. The IBCs were regarded previously as informal groups that identified certain issues where they had a joint interest. Europe has interpreted the SG’s mandate such that the IBCs focus on the needs at the country level, but are not operational and they do not have pooled funding. It was also described that Europe had a constructive atmosphere at the regional level, with strong participation from regional directors. One interviewee noted that trust and good relationships are key to regional coordination.

UNECE frames the regional level as a platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration. There is a long list of UN and external entities they work with but little mention of how they support them or include them in the conversation. The SG’s mandate for the RCP was interpreted as an internal platform for internal UN system coordination. However, there have been some questions as to whether to open the RCP up to other stakeholders and, if so, how. One interviewee noted that

noted that there is a sense of caution toward opening up to others (e.g. civil society, private sector) because of the belief that it would change the dynamics of the dialogues at the regional level and lead to less candid discussion.

In terms of the implementation of the IBCs, it was consciously decided that projects/project management should stay within the agencies, not the IBCs, and therefore the IBCs should not include other (non-UN) stakeholders. However, whether this will remain the case is still an open question; it seems that if the IBCs did become operational, the region would be open to including other stakeholders.

What has the Europe & Central Asia region implemented? What outputs have resulted thus far?

Regional Collaborative Platform

The reform process at the regional level has been a “smooth transition,” according to one interviewee. The European RCP formally came into being at the end of 2020, with a tri-partite secretariat: the Joint Secretary in NY, UNECE, and DCO. Some perceive the tri-partite secretariat as having added an additional dimension of complexity to the pre-existing regional structure, in that it the division of responsibilities is unclear.

• A September 2020 report noted that, “Europe and Central Asia ha[d] elaborated a draft inaugural work plan with key deliverables for 2020-2021 in preparation for the meeting with the DSG in March 2019. The work plan was not discussed at the meeting and w[ould] need to be revised based on the final roadmap.”

• One interviewee noted that the reform initiated a management response. A review of the IBCs was conducted, led by the regional office of UN WOMEN in Istanbul and UNDP, to determine how the IBCs could forge stronger connections with RCs, UNCTs, and Member States and become needs driven.

• The regional UN system in Europe and Central Asia typically met twice annually in person. It was stated by one interviewee that these were important occasions for building trust amongst regional directors. As a result of Covid-19, their meeting cadence accelerated. The regional system met nine times over the course of 2020 to discuss how to support the country teams, and a number of guidelines were issued by the IBCs. In particular, Covid-19’s negative impact on gender equality led to an important new work stream for the RCP and UNECE as the secretariat.

• In Spring 2021, the European region’s RCP presented its elaborated workplan at the regional forum chaired by the DSG. It was reported that the progress in the region was well-received.

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<th>Issue Based Coalitions</th>
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<td>Health and Wellbeing (Chaired by WHO)</td>
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<td>Adolescent and Youth (Chaired by UNFPA &amp; UNICEF)</td>
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<td>Large Movements of People, Displacement &amp; Resilience (Chaired by UNHCR, UNDP &amp; ION)</td>
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<td>Environment &amp; Climate Change (Chaired by UNEP, UNESCO &amp; UNECE)</td>
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<td>Sustainable Food Systems (FAO, WFP, UNICEF &amp; WHO)</td>
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<th>Programmatic and Operational Effectiveness</th>
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<td>Peer Support Group (Chaired by DCO Regional Director)</td>
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<td>Regional Operational Management Team (Chaired by UNDP &amp; UN WOMEN)</td>
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<td>Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics (Chaired by UNECE &amp; UNICEF)</td>
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Source: “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).”
See: [http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf](http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf)
In the spirit of SG-Recommendation 3 (enhanced transparency and results-based management), “ECE and R-UNSDG have been very active and engaged in leading the development of the proposal.” 71 Their focus is on:

» avoiding duplication with country level reporting;

» targeted approach to specific thematic issues (to be defined);

» building on IBC work (there are currently 7 IBCs plus a coordination group on data so this will need to be prioritized);

» linkages with the regional/sub-regional data analysis of the Cooperation Frameworks;

» alignment with QCPR indicators and the RSDF process/report;

» submission to the RSDF and ECOSOC.

At the regional level, it seems that most activities seem to be policy setting.


The Regional UN System Meeting has established 7 IBCs: 72

1. **Health and Wellbeing** (chaired by WHO);

2. **Gender Equality** (chaired by UN Women and UNFPA);

3. **Adolescent and Youth** (chaired by UNFPA and UNICEF);

4. **Social Protection** (chaired by UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and WHO);

5. **Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience** (chaired by UNHCR, UNDP and IOM)

6. **Environment and Climate Change** (chaired by UNEP, UNESCO and UNECE)

7. **Sustainable Food Systems** (FAO, WFP, UNICEF and WHO)

As one interviewee noted, the IBCs have created specific task teams to discuss certain issues. It was noted that the task teams invited RCs to the meetings to gain a better understanding of their needs, the advice they are looking for, and in turn produced guidelines.

In the spirit of being demand-driven, Health and Wellbeing (IBC 1) used a survey method to solicit feedback from country offices.

72. See pg. 4: Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf
They have also established a “Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics,” co-chaired by the Statistics division, formerly the IBC on SDG Data and Monitoring (chaired by UNECE and UNICEF). This Group has a “novel structure,” as one put it, in that they are linked to the NSS offices in the European region.

The European region has adopted a model where anyone can make a suggestion to create a new IBC. For example, it was suggested that Europe create a Human Rights IBC, which raised the question of whether the IBCs could go beyond the scope of development to more political spheres.

UNECE frames the IBCs as serving internal and external coordination purpose: “Led by one or several agencies, these broad, multi-partner coalitions coordinate the UN response to cross-cutting challenges in the region, help realize synergies among related areas of work of different UN entities, and serve as platforms to reach out to non-UN stakeholders. Through regular meetings, the coalitions coordinate their cross-sectoral activities and develop plans for joint action (e.g. interagency guidance notes, common position papers, side events at intergovernmental meetings).”

Overall, the work of the UNECE IBCs seems mostly to host meetings and to create reports, and policy/guideline-setting. Their LMPDR work plan document is really telling.

In terms of Covid-19 programs, in March 2020, the WHO-UN-Red Cross COVID-19 Platform was embedded in the IBC-Health, to facilitate coordination at the regional level to enhance multi-stakeholder engagement at the country level, ensuring a multi-sectoral response to COVID-19.

Knowledge Platforms

Overall, one interviewee noted that the European region has not yet implemented the SG’s recommendation for a knowledge hub in large part because of a lack of budget and resources. The European region has partnered with ESCWA to scale their Manara system into Europe and Central Asia, but this has not yet been realized.

As of September 25, 2020, the status of the regional knowledge management hub was as follows:

- Develop an on-line web-based guide to provide an entry point to expertise and key knowledge products of the regional UN system by major policy area. The guide will be located on the regional UN cooperation

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73. Ibid.
74. See: https://unece.org/issue-based-coalitions
75. See: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/IBC%20LMPDR%20Workplan%202020.pdf
77. See pg. 7: See pg. 4: Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020)." See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf

- The regional Issue-based Coalitions (IBCs) will be the backbone for the web-based guide.

- Technological options for providing a single access point to existing digital libraries and repositories by regional UNDS entities will be considered.

- An initial mapping of existing digital repositories has been carried out.

- The regional knowledge management hub needs to be closely aligned with the needs of clients, in particular UNCTs and RC/RCOs and a more in-depth assessment of clients’ needs, e.g. through selected interviews and a survey, is envisaged.

- UNECE set up a [regional platform](http://www.unece.org/runcwelcome/un-cooperation-in-the-unece-region.html) on statistics for SDGs, which consists of:
  
  » Knowledge Hub on Statistics for SDGs, launched in December 2019
  
  » Dashboard of SDG Indicators, launched in March 2020

  » Database of SDG Indicators, launched in March 2020

The platforms have been used for the regional SDG report.

» The purpose of the 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 to disseminate data and metadata. The Knowledge Hub and the Database primarily appeal to statisticians and other professionals interested in methodologies, comparability of indicators, and analyses. The Dashboard would be of interest to the public and to policymakers who would have an easy way to see where their country stands among other countries of the region with respect to the implementation of SDGs. The Dashboard and Database rely on the data from the Global SDG database.

» In the work on the platform, the UNECE secretariat is guided by the Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs and supported by a task team of experts from national statistical offices.
How has LAC interpreted the SG’s mandate?

In ECLAC’s strategy, they stated that the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean would be the main internal mechanism for collaboration at the regional level. They frame the RCP as an effort “to unite all UN entities working on development in the region.” 78

ECLAC describes that countries in LATAM region are working to strengthen institutional frameworks for the implementation of the Agenda, and positions this within the broader UNDS reform process and its aim to increase collaboration between agencies, funds and programs to be more effective and agile in responding to countries’ needs. They also call for further multi sector collaboration (governments, civil society, private sector, other stakeholders). 79

ECLAC’s writings on regional reform, like the other regions, occur in the midst of Covid-19. The Covid context is framed as reinforcing the strong call for regional integration and bloc negotiations (p.46). In LAC, key issues exacerbated by Covid include poverty and extreme hunger (59-60); social protection/informal work; vulnerable groups/women; education; transfer or work from formal to informal economy; call for strengthening productive sectors (digital transformation, training). 80

79. Ibid. pg 9.
What has the LAC region implemented? What outputs have resulted thus far?

Regional Collaborative Platform

- ECLAC’s RCP replaced UN coordination mechanisms (the UN Sustainable Development Groups and the Regional Coordination Mechanisms).

- The RCP is composed of the regional directors of all UN agencies, funds and programmes; and the regional director of the UN Development Coordination Office.

- LATAM also created a join secretariat between ECLAC, UNDP and the UN Development Coordination Office to support the vice chairs and members of RCP in their work (p.116)

- The platform is supposedly results-oriented and driven by the demands and priorities of member states. What does this mean in practice? Once a year, the RCP is to notify member countries of activities and results and produce a regional results report, which will also inform ECOSOC and be made publicly available.

- The regional architecture includes: 1. Forum (monitoring against SDG targets and means of implementation; 2. Subsidiary bodies and committees (data, training, publications, forums, but no measurement of outcome—clear there is a lot of convening power, lots of events); 3. Key resolutions and agreements

- ECLAC has also instituted the following mechanisms around the RCP:

  » (i) the regional operations management teams, whose role is to support coordination strategies for administrative and recruitment issues at the regional level;

  » (ii) the Peer Support Group, whose function is to ensure the quality of the common country assessments and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which are the two strategic documents guiding the joint work of the Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country teams;

  » (iii) the Partnership and Communications Working Group, whose role is to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and make the work of the Regional Collaborative Platform more visible;

  » (iv) the SDG Data and Statistics Group, which has a mandate to develop and strengthen statistical capacities and data on the SDGs; and

  » (v) the Knowledge Management Hub Steering committee, whose objectives and operations are presented in part 6 of this section. (117)
Strategic direction and decision making

Regional Collaborative Platform - Platform LAC (RCP LAC)
Chair: DSG  Vice Chairs: ECLAC / UNDP

**Substantive Engagement**
- Climate Change and Resilience
  UNDRR / UNEP
- Crime and Violence
  UNICEF / UNODC / UN WOMEN
- Equitable Growth
  ECLAC / ILO / UNDP
- Financing for Development
  ECLAC / UNDP
- Governance & institutions
  UNDP / UNODC / UNOPS
- Human Mobility
  ECLAC / IOM / UNHCR / UNICEF
- Youth
  UNDP / UNFPA
- Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls
  UN Women

**Programmatic and Operational Effectiveness**
- Regional OMT
  UNDP / UNFPA
- Peer Support Group (M&E)
  DCO
- SDG Data & Statistics Group
  UNICEF / UNFPA / UN Women
- Partnerships & Communication Group
  UNDP / UNFPA
- Knowledge Management Hub Steering Committee
  ECLAC / UNDP

Substantive / logistical support for RCP

RCP LAC Joint Secretariat
DCO / ECLAC / UNDP

Source: “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).”
See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf
• The LAC region activated a number of committees/programs at regional level during Covid, including a Committee on South-South Cooperation (a network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda); an Executive Committee of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies; Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.  

• MINURVI: created a regional urban observatory (Latin American and Caribbean Urban and Cities Platform) – a platform for training and harmonizing methodologies and indicators and also for the cooperation of the national statistics offices.  

• Current state of the RCP: The Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean has developed a work plan for 2021 that has been endorsed by all its members. In addition, it has held four meetings with all its members in a short period, as well as one with all the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the region and two of a technical nature with the focal points of the issue-based coalitions and working groups.

• Regarding SG-Recommendation 3 (enhanced transparency and results-based management), as of September 2020, there were plans, “to prepare an annual regional UN system-wide report with emphasis on joint UNDS results and impacts at the regional level on its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.”

82. Ibid at pg 115.  
83. Ibid at 119.  

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**Issue Based Coalitions**

The LAC region has created 5 issue based coalitions around cross cutting issues:  

1. **Human Mobility** (IOM/UNHCR)  
   2. **Equitable Growth** (UNDP/ILO/ECLAC)  
   3. **Crime and Violence** (UNICEF/UN WOMEN-UNODC)  
   4. **Governance and Institutions** (UNODC/UNDP/UNOPS)  
   5. **Climate Change/Resilience** (UNEP/UNDRR)

   • LAC organizes their work at the regional level around two additional workstreams—the cross cutting issues of Youth and Gender.

One report claims that another IBC is being proposed on financing for development.

“The initial 5 IBCs were endorsed by the UNSDG LAC in August 2019. They have remained unchanged since. Some of them have been more active than others, depending on the lead agencies.” As of September 2020, the focus for the IBCs was: 86

1. Developing common messages on the impact of COVID-19;
2. Development of policy notes;
3. Organizing regional webinars on specific issues related to the IBCs and COVID-19.

In addition to the IBCs, there are other regional groups that are active in LAC, for example:

» Communications and Advocacy Group, which has also participation from DCO HQ (CRRS), this group could potentially become the regional communications group within the RCP,

» PSG

Knowledge Platforms

At the 2020 High Level Political Forum, LAC officially launched the “Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.” They describe it as: “A key (one-stop-shop) platform (digital, website) covering the coordination and availability of United Nations assets in the region. It provides up-to-date information on the implementation of the 2030 agenda at global, regional and national levels and links to knowledge products (see p. 121-123 for structure of web portal, if it is helpful to detail in report).” 87

A steering committee (offered strategic guidance and continuously oversees development and updating or the portal) for the regional knowledge management platform was created: ECLAC, UNDP, UN Dev Coordination Office and reps of regional agencies funds and programs was developed in an inclusive, co-created process 88

When it came time to decide where to structure this knowledge management platform in LATAM, they drew on existing infrastructure: ECLAC had the largest, most comprehensive repository of regionally comparable statistics for the region, and had already created a website for statistical monitoring of the MDGs. 89

86. See pg. 4: “Regional Review. Summary of Current Status per Workstream (as of 25 September 2020).” See: http://www.regionalcommissions.org/Inventory_Regional%20Review%20Roll-out.pdf
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
They frame the Platform as “An area providing general information” on the Agenda in the region. 90 It is a communication and knowledge sharing platform designed to make information resources available but also to showcase what is being done.

The Platform is an expansive repository of various information products: information on activities, news, publications and information resources, national reports and institutional arrangements related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and work associated with the 17 SDGs in the United Nations system. 91

The LAC Knowledge Platform is also stated to include “[…] a UN offering of services, specific analytic and policy tools, and data. The platform is open to Member States, UNCTs and the general public. It was discussed in 2019 that expert rosters were to be derived from the five existing issue-based coalitions (Human mobility; Climate change and resilience; Equitable growth; Governance and institutions; Crime and violence). Each Issue Based Coalition (agencies leading) would define its own mapping exercise according to its specific characteristics and particularities, thematic areas and subareas of coverage and installed capacities in each entity. Further discussion will be required between the Vice-chairs and DCO as the roadmap is being rolled out.” 92

The Knowledge Platform has a specific section dedicated to statistical follow up and monitoring of progress on the 2030 Agenda (the SDG Gateway), and has defined specific objectives for it. (see image IV.2). This source has SDG data segmented by SDG, visualization tools, a statistical management knowledge hub, and country profiles on SDG status. 93

The Platform is a public website – therefore available to all stakeholders (ECLAC points out that they make it available to civil society, youth, private sector, parliaments, local governments, and general public)

ECLAC commends the regional statistical community for producing and making available more data which can be used to analyze the number targets (p.89) 94

ECLAC espouses the value that the Knowledge Management Platform creates in terms of:

» For Users: aggregates information, making disparate/fragmented information more accessible fostering greater citizen participation, empowering them to hold the UN system accountable [potential to foster greater trust-a strategic imperative going forward]

» For Agencies Funds and Programmes: allows for more synergies and collaborations in producing relevant information in support of national public policies. They describe the Platform plays

91. Ibid.
a key role in facilitating convergence of initiatives in the region and that there is evidence of impact of joint, multi-agency collaboration:

*It is not only a potential information tool, but also an instrument that facilitates decision-making (e.g., for the design of joint strategies to strengthen national capacities for the production of SDG indicators with a focus on the real needs of Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean). In this way, the Platform fosters collaboration and integration of all capabilities and efforts at the regional and national levels. This multi-agency regional initiative shows the potential results of joint cooperation and collaboration with a view to progressing with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region.* (124) One question on my mind: is there evidence that data is being used? It cannot be assumed that the access/availability of data is improving decision-making. If there is not a culture of data-informed decision making both in the organization or in society, then the full value of this may not be realized.

- During Covid-19, LAC launched the COVID-19 Observatory. It compiles and presents information on the public policies that the 33 countries of the region have implemented to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and analyses the economic and social effects that the pandemic will have at the national and sectoral levels. They identify 7 subject areas and 45 measures to classify the actions taken by the countries in the region. 95

- UNECLAC claims that the regional level has played a big role in understanding where progress has stalled on SDGS during Covid, or where there may have been negative impact. The two responses: (1) the creation or upgrading of institutional arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, and (2) the mainstreaming of the SDGs in national development plans or the alignment of these plans with the Goals.

95. Ibid at 91.
A partnership for the transition to a repositioned United Nations Development System at the regional level

Mandated by the UN General Assembly in response to the vision and proposals of the Secretary-General, the reform of the United Nations Development System involves a set of far-reaching changes in the way this global architecture works. Its ultimate objective is to yield a UNDS that is more integrated, more focused on delivery on the ground, with clearer internal and external accountability for contributions to national needs, and with capacities, skill sets and resources better aligned to the 2030 Agenda.

Taking into account the importance of the 2020 Operational Activities Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in reviewing four years of implementation of the guidance given by UN Member States in General Assembly Resolution 71/243 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, KAS and Cepei decided to join forces to feed with evidence, analysis and recommendations into the roll-out of the regional review process.
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