

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 2020-2025

Development Process and Implementation Status 2023

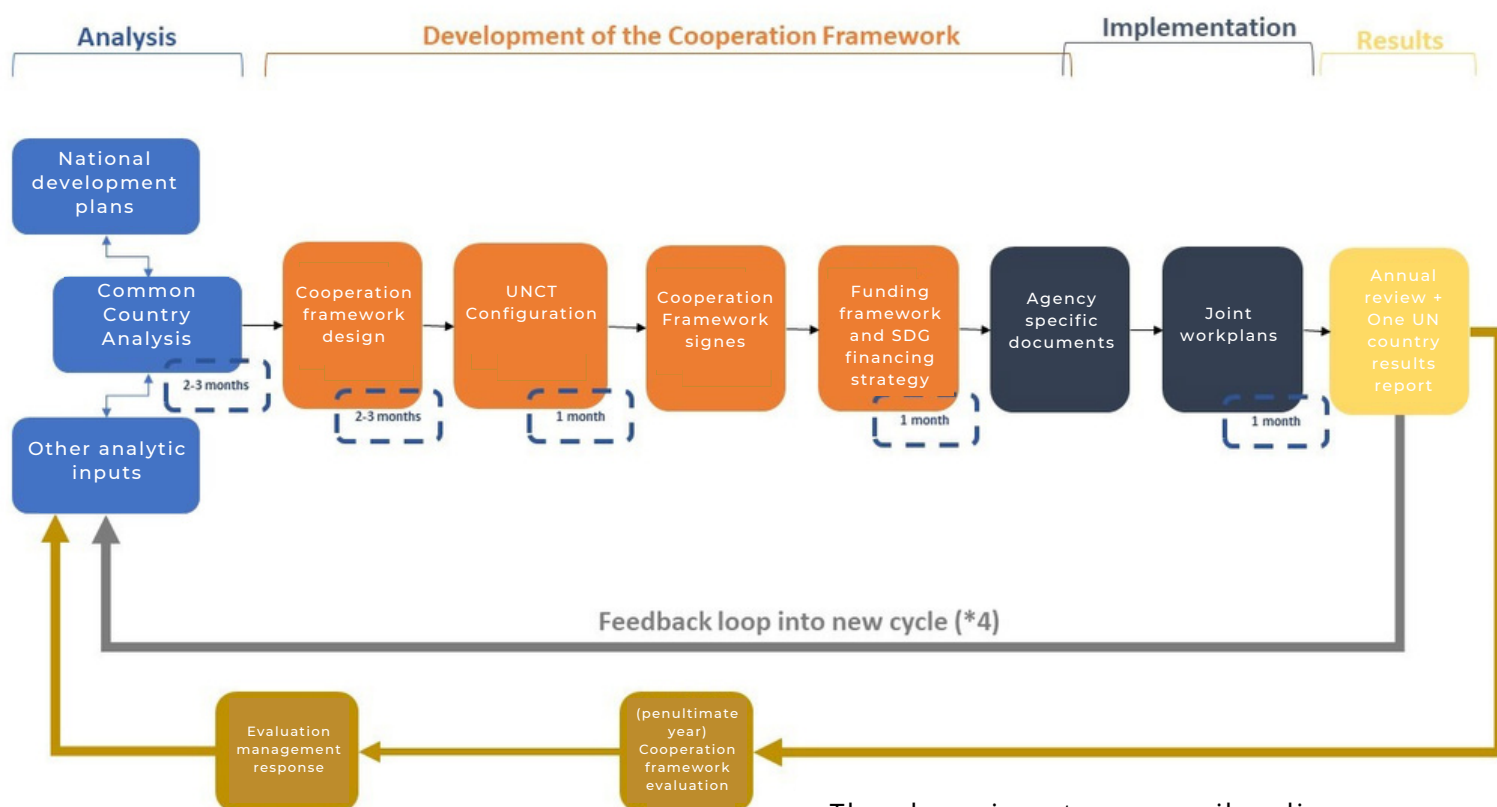


INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025

General Assembly resolution 72/279 elevates the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)”. Given the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the urgency of its timeline, the resolution represents a significant shift. The Cooperation Framework (CF) now guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The CF determines and reflects the UN development system’s contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country.

In 2019, the United Nations Development System (UNDS) agencies and funds in collaboration with the Government of South Africa (GoSA) embarked on a process to develop the UNSDCF for the period 2020-2025. Given the need for a whole of society approach towards the realisation of agenda 2030, the development process involved consultations with other stakeholder, namely, civil society, private sector and research and academic institutions. Other components which contributed to the development of the UNSDCF include the development of a Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the analysis of the National Development Plan (NDP), the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA). Below is a schematic representation of how the development of the UNSDCF must be undertaken.



- The above is not necessarily a linear process. Overlap among some steps maybe necessary to ensure optimal preparation.
- The assumption for this diagram is that the cooperation framework is for a five-year period. This could be different per country.

The Process of developing the UNSDCF

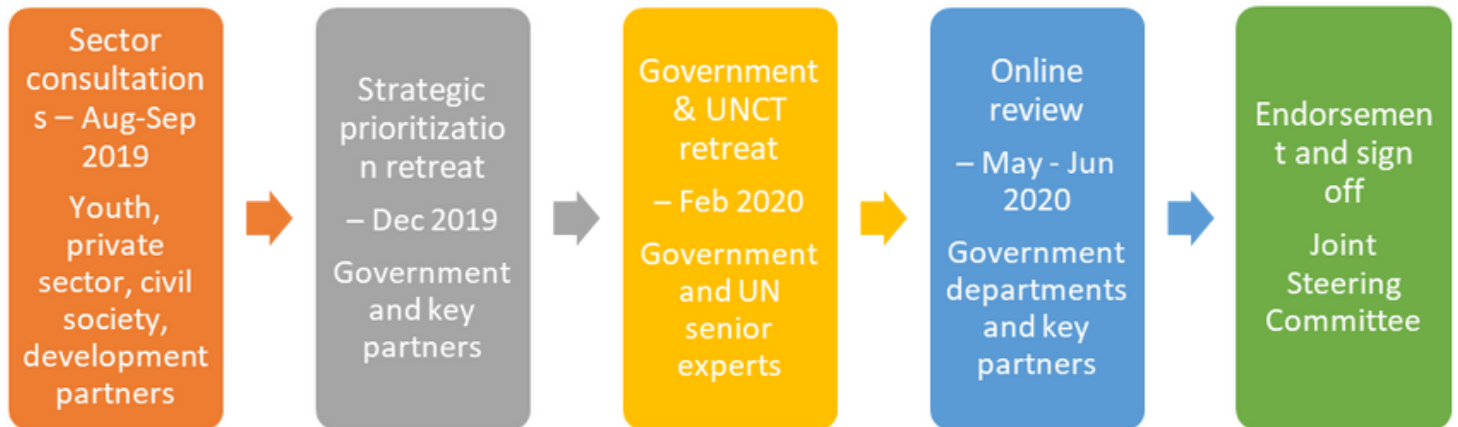
In line with the global guidance for development of the UNSDCF, the process in South Africa followed the following steps:

Common Country Analysis

UN South Africa began this process in January 2019. It was conducted through the pooling of data from a host of verified and credible sources, working closely with agencies in the country. This process assisted in identifying unifying and collective outcomes which have the potential to advance national development across the widest possible range of the SDGs.

Drawing/Building on existing national analyses

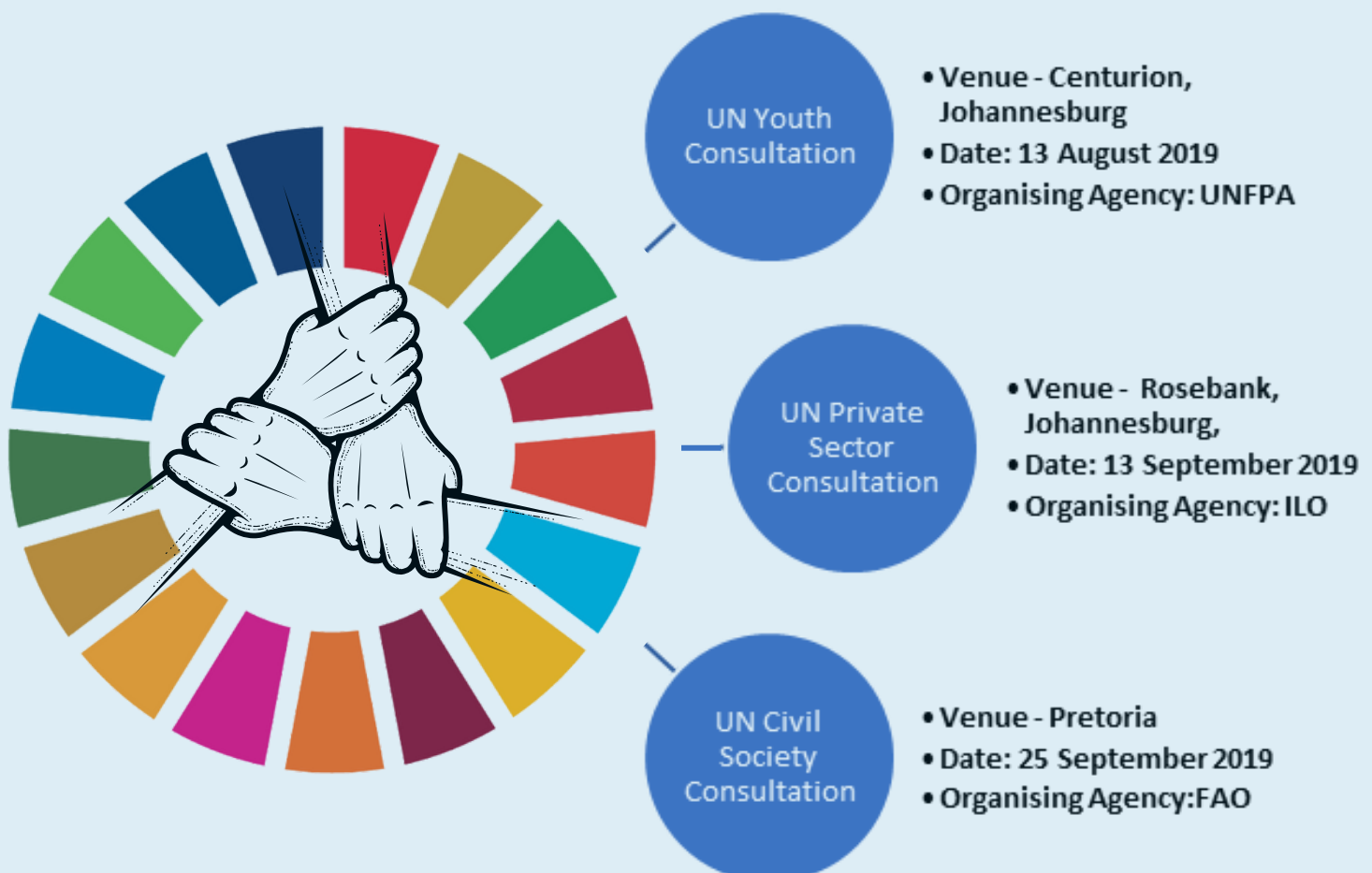
Parallel to the CCA process, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) leveraged existing analysis of National Development Plan (NDP), MTSF, President Ramaphosa’s State of the Nation Address (2019 and 2020) where he announced the seven priorities to fast track South Africa’s path to prosperity. The 7 SONA priorities formed the basis of the Strategic Prioritization Retreat between UN South Africa and the Government of South Africa.



Stakeholder Consultations

As part of the process, the agencies, and funds, under the guidance of the Resident Coordinator consulted and engaged civil society, youth groups, women's organizations as well as the private sector to build consensus on key priorities for UN development assistance. The following diagram presents an overview of the engagements which took place leading to the first draft of the UNSDCF:

The consultations took the form of workshops. Various UN agencies were tasked with hosting consultations across key sectors; for example, UNFPA for youth, ILO for the private sector, and FAO for civil society. The consultations were all conducted in Gauteng.



Participation in the consultation was by invitation, with approximately 65 people in each consultative session. Within each consultation, a diversity of reflection and commentary was recorded in the various developmental areas. For example, the youth consultation drew in youth groups organizations, as well as individuals' participants who were identified as achievers in their respective fields, like business, science, and education. In the private sector consultation, there were business representatives across various sectors as well as representatives of organized labour. The civil society consultation drew in organizations that provide services, corporate social initiative entities and membership-based organizations. The outcomes of the engagements included some of the challenges facing South Africa and would feed into the prioritization exercise between government and the UN.

Pre-Strategic Prioritization Retreat

The multi-sector consultations were followed by the Pre-Strategic Prioritization Retreat, an internal UN SA discussion on the results of the CCA, analysis of Government's National development Plan, as well as the UNs comparative advantage. The Pre-SPR served as a precursor and preparation ahead of the pivotal Strategic Prioritization Retreat (SPR) with government which took place in December 2019.

Strategic Prioritization Retreat

The SPR workshop was undertaken from the 3- 4 December 2019. The SPR provided an opportunity to the UNCT and GoSA to discuss both long and medium-term priorities aligned with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, agreed upon by the Cabinet. The SPR was undertaken to ensure that the UNSDCF interventions are grounded on an in-depth understanding of the national development context and policy priorities as well as positioned within a longer-term strategic view to 2030. The SPR exercise underpinned a shared view of the country's sustainable development challenges and objectives, utilizing the MTSF, the UN commissioned Common Country analysis and the civil society, private sector, youth consultations and an internal UN pre-SPR meeting as the starting point. The SPR provided the opportunity for the UNCT and Government to reach a consensus on the key development issues facing the country, and in response, the strategic priorities that would capture the UNDS' positioning and contribution to national development and achievement of the SDGs. The main objective of the joint visioning exercise was to identify the strategic priority areas for collective action and the strategic shifts that will form the core of the 2020-25 UNSDCF for South Africa.

Following this process, the UNSDCF's overall goal is that people in South Africa live prosperous and healthy lives in a safe and cohesive society that protects and values environmental sustainability, which is underpinned by four strategic priorities:

1. Inclusive, just, and sustainable economic growth

2. Human capital and social transformation

3. Effective, efficient, and transformative

4. Climate resilience and sustainably managed natural

To ensure that the UN system in South Africa is appropriately positioned and has the necessary capacities to deliver on the CF the UNCT discussed and agreed on the following additions to UNCT SA:

Considering the national challenges on spatial transformation, planning, and integrated human settlements the UNCT resolved on the inclusion of UN-Habitat as a member of the UNCT. The UNCT has also included International Trade Centre (ITC). ITC is a development agency, which is part of the UN family and is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) as well as private sector development on trade related matters. ITC essentially enables MSMEs in developing and transition economies to become more competitive and connect to international markets for trade and investment, thus raising incomes and creating job opportunities, especially for women, young people, and disadvantaged communities. This is particularly important given the high unemployment levels in the country.

Response to Covid-19:

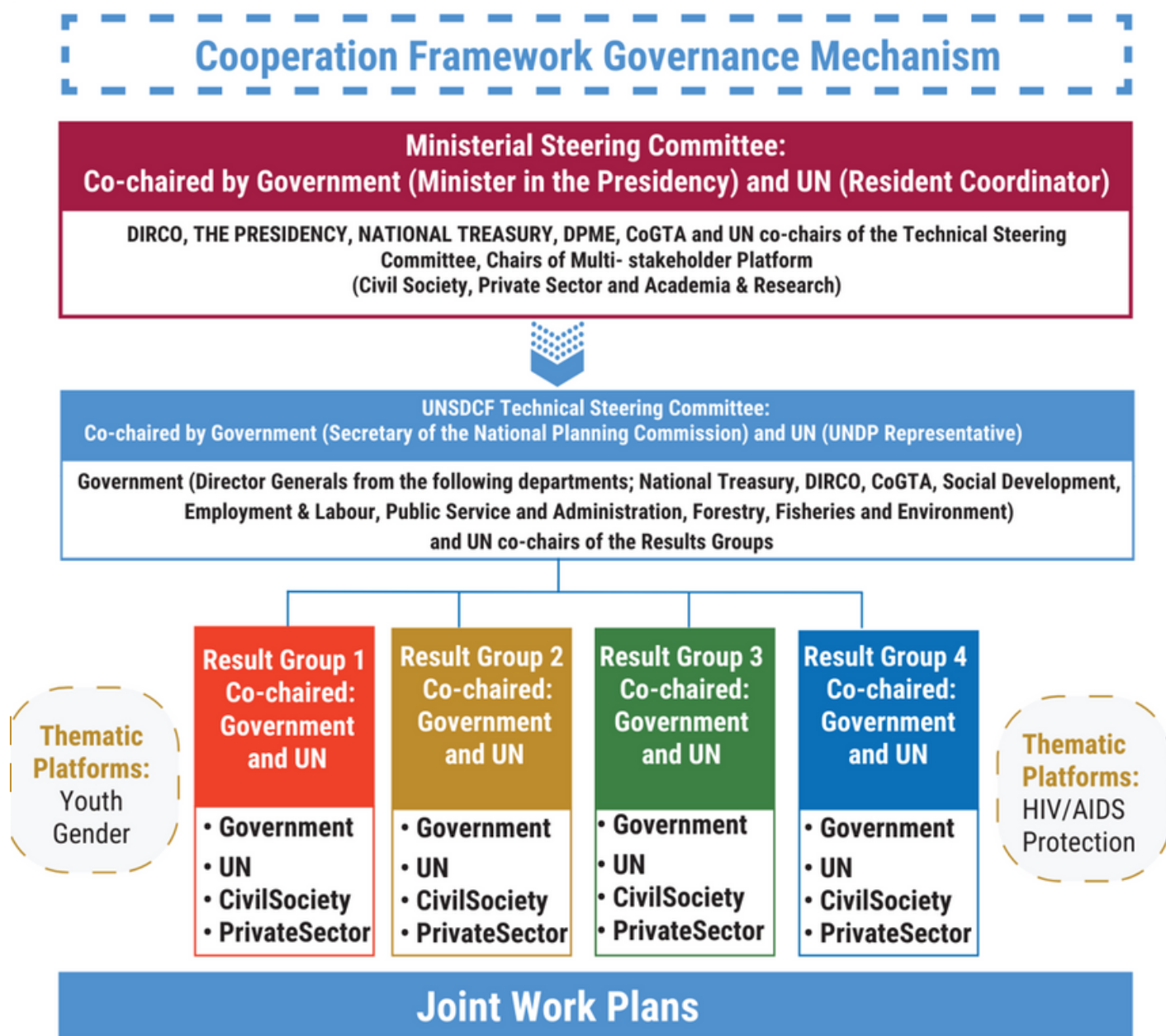
The retreat and the first draft of the UNSDCF were done in February before South Africa announced its first positive case of Covid-19. Since March 2020, the UNCT agreed the UNSDCF needs to reflect on the health and socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in South Africa. Therefore, it was imperative for the UNSDCF to incorporate the effects of the Covid-19 on the South African landscape. The document has been adjusted in this regard, reflecting on the socio-economic impacts of the virus on the development landscape and has also highlighted the importance of identifying and making provisions for external shocks.

Governance Mechanism

The Governance Model aligned to the UNSDCF which has been agreed to by the government is a much-lauded achievement for the UN/Government partnership in South Africa. No such governance structure has been put in place before. The overarching principle for the Governance Model is that it should reinforce the UN Reforms at a countrywide level, serving as a mechanism that promotes greater collaboration between the Government, the UN, and other national partners.

Importantly, the governance mechanism encompasses the entire programme cycle, including the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting phases of the Cooperation Framework. It takes into consideration lessons from the concluding Cooperation Framework cycle, examples of governance models in other countries and, ultimately, the shifts in the new UNSDCF.

Figure 1: Cooperation Framework Governance Mechanism



Signing of the CF

The CF was signed on Tuesday, 19 April 2022 by the Minister in the Presidency Mr Mondli Gungubele and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations.

Common Country Analysis (CCA) Update (2022)

Since mid-2020, when the last UN Common Country Analysis for South Africa was published, South Africa has been hit by civil unrests, natural disasters such as unprecedented floods and droughts, renewed anti-migrant protests and, more recently, a food and energy price crisis. The COVID-19 crisis alone has contributed to the deterioration of key socio-economic issues and sectors, such as gender-based violence, unemployment, health, education, and to heightened levels of vulnerability amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged segments of

of society. Considering all these emerging and contextual issues, at the UNCT took the decision to update the CCA. The main objective of an updated CCA is to capture these various contextual changes, identify what challenges – but also opportunities – these changes have created and suggest possible programmatic changes for the UNSDCF and JWPs. This process was concluded in December and the updated CCA is annexed to this report.

Operationalisation of Governance Mechanism Update

The operationalisation of the governance mechanism has experienced significant delays. Despite the delays some progress has been made towards the operationalization of this mechanism. The Resident Coordinator a.i. worked closely with the office of the Minister in the Presidency to initiate the process. The first step was to identify the relevant government departments to participate and co-chair the Result Groups. In collaboration with the Presidency, appointment letters were signed (by both the RC and the Minister) and sent to identified government co-chairs to co-lead the joint work.

The initial proposal of the co-chairing for the result groups is presented in table 1.

Table 1: First Proposal for Government Co-Chairs

Chairs	Result Group: Inclusive, just, and sustainable economic growth	Result Group: Human capital and social transformation	Result Group: 3. Effective, efficient, and transformative governance	Result Group: Climate resilience and sustainably managed natural resources
UN	ILO	WHO	UNDP	UNEP
	FAO	UNICEF, UNWOMEN	UNODC	UNIDO
Government	Department of Labour and Employment	Department of Social Development	Department of Public Service and Administration	Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment
	Department of Small Business Development	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities	National Planning Commission	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy

However, the UNCT would like to propose that the co-chairing be aligned to the Government Cluster Co-Chairs to avoid duplication as the RG priorities are aligned to the five government clusters. The proposal is presented in the table 2.

Table 2: Proposal to link RG Chairs to the Government Cluster Chairing

Chairs	Result Group: Inclusive, just, and sustainable economic growth	Result Group: Human capital and social transformation	Result Group: 3. Effective, efficient, and transformative governance	Result Group: Climate resilience and sustainably managed natural resources
UN	ILO	WHO	UNDP	UNEP
	FAO	UNICEF, UNWOMEN	UNODC	UNIDO
Government	(Economic Cluster) Department of Human Settlements	(Social Protection) Department of Health	(Governance) Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs	(International relations, peace & security) Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment
	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy	Department of Basic Education	Department for the Public Service and Administration	Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

The new Resident Coordinator Nelson Muffuh has recently raised the issue of operationalising the governance mechanism as a matter of urgency with both the Minister in the Presidency and the DIRCO Minister. The RC and the UNCT also welcomed the recommitment to the UNSDCF and the agreed upon governance arrangements conveyed through DIRCO, Planning Commission and Deputy Minister in the Presidency who represented the Minister at the recent UNCT retreat.

Implementation of the UNSDCF

Results Group Joint Workplans (JWPs)

The CF is made operational through the development of joint work plan(s), to this end, the four result groups led by their chairs, began the process of developing joint workplans in April 2020. The JWPs were developed in consultation with different stakeholders i.e., South African Government (district, provincial and national), civil society, private sector, and academia. The JWPs guide the implementation of the UNSDCF. Currently the RGs are finalising the JWPs for 2023 and this is also being done in consultations with different stakeholders.

Key Achievements to date (2020-2023)

Covid Response

The UN System in South Africa began its efforts to support the Governments COVID-19 response in the early days of the pandemic. An Emergency Appeal to the value of mobilize one hundred and thirty-six million dollars (\$136,000,000) was launched which guided the UN's interventions, in partnership with civil society, the private sector and the Government. It focused on protecting lives and livelihoods. Between March and December 2020, the UN undertook almost 200 interventions across six key sectors: health, protection, water and sanitation, governance and livelihoods, food security and education. On behalf of the Government the UN has undertaken several assessments; a national rapid needs assessment as well as targeted food security, gender-based violence and socio-economic impact assessments. Despite global austerity approximately \$25 million has been raised and repurposed to assist the South African response.

From March 2020, the UN system has been working in partnership with the Government, civil society organizations and the private sector in contributing to a broad response to COVID-19. The initial contribution spanned a six-month time frame and emphasized emergency activities and the reorientation of UN programming to mitigate the impact of the virus on the most vulnerable populations. In conjunction with this response, the UN also supported the development of a comprehensive Socio-Economic and Governance assessment for COVID-19, where one of the policy recommendations was the introduction of a deepening social assistance programme to fill the gaps created by the pandemic. As a result, the government introduced the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant in 2020.

The UN System (2020) also spent \$755,000 in direct assistance and provided technical advice valued at \$4,590,000 to Government and Solidarity Fund (A public benefit organisation fund established by the president of South Africa, with a mandate to support the vulnerable members of society who were most impacted by the pandemic) programmes. In 2021, with the ongoing support from the UN, 43 per cent of the population had been vaccinated, 752 186[1] people continued to receive essential services despite an overwhelmed health care system, 511 128 people received critical WASH services and 6 986 835 children were supported with distance learning.

District Development Model

In April 2021, the UN signed an MOU with COGTA. This partnership enabled the development of district specific implementation plans based on three interrelated pillars. These are (i) Unlocking Economic Value Chains with the intention of creating opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth; (ii) Increased stakeholder commitment and advocacy in gender-based violence and femicide intended to contribute to Human Capital and Social Transformation; and (iii) Service Delivery Enhancement, focusing on strengthening the work of existing service delivery instruments such as the Thusong Service Centres. Since the signing of the MoU, notable progress has been made in the implementation of the district mechanism through the signature projects in the pilot districts. The joint COGTA/UN technical teams have built on the extensive consultations with the districts to ensure that key development interventions are understood and implemented jointly by various stakeholders.

Flash Floods in Kwa Zulu Natal

The unprecedented disruptions caused by the floods led to increased hardships for children and families, including lack of basic needs and disruption of daily routines. To support government the UN launched a coordinated humanitarian response focusing on saving the lives of women and girls and young people, and upholding dignity and human rights with emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and GBV. The UN assisted with the distribution of food and non-food items to affected communities in vulnerable situations. The UN working with implementing partners also provided psychosocial support to the most vulnerable migrant families.

The UN also conducted a rapid geospatial analysis of the flood impacts on crops in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape from 10 to 20 April 2022. The assessment provided information from districts, local municipalities and wards in the areas of interest. The results were provided as maps by administrative units and in tables with descriptive statistics. With recent advances in geospatial and information technologies and updated land cover maps, crop-specific information adapted to national conditions with tailored field campaigns has the potential to better support response programmes and agricultural development. In addition, the UN support the province with the sexual and reproductive health essentials required by women and young girls displaced by the floods. The UN also mobilised national volunteers to support KZN in responding effectively to the disaster.

South-South Collaboration on Disaster Risk Management

The UN in collaboration with DPME and NDMC recently convened a knowledge-sharing series on disaster risk reduction which was aimed at sharing experiences and expertise on the creation of a system of stability in response to the climatic catastrophes which the country has experienced, as well as further reduce disaster losses. The series also reviewed existing disaster-related challenges faced by South Africa; and what works under various conditions, and came up with strategies to prepare for future ones by focusing on monitoring, assessing

and understanding disaster risk, and sharing expertise information on how they are mitigated. The series also reflected on how to strengthen disaster risk governance and coordination across all relevant institutions and sectors; the full and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders at appropriate levels; and enhancing multi-hazard early warning systems, preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Through the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Office (UNDRR), four countries who have exhibited best practices in managing disasters were convened to share their experiences, these countries are India, Japan, Mozambique and Bangladesh.

Social Protection

The UNCT provided technical assistance to modelling exercises undertaken by an Expert Panel on the Basic Income Support (BIS). The aim of the exercise was to examine the economic and social effects of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (SRD), evaluate financing options, examine poverty and inequality outcomes at national and provincial levels, and explore the economic implications. The SRD was initially introduced in 2020 and as a result of this initiative the SRD was extended to March 2024 and currently has 7.8 million beneficiaries.

Education

To contribute to the KwaZulu Natal emergency response (following the devastations of the floods), the UN supported the continuation of learning and recovery through the provision of remediation for learners i.e., basic skills development, capacity development for the trimmed curriculum and early grade reading. Support was also provided for the development of a quality assurance framework and design of the National Reading Survey. This support was provided by capacitating 3,505 teachers, 209 education administrators, and 5,200 parents. 2 484 044 learners were reached through online platforms and an additional 33.4 million practice questions were completed on Siyavula online learning platform.

Transforming Education Summit (TES)

The UNCT was instrumental in supporting Government to convene national consultations required in preparation for the TES. The preparation commenced with the establishment of a National Task Team led by the UN with representatives from the Department of Basic Education, Department of Higher Education and Training, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Basic Education Attaché in Paris and National Youth Development Agency. 15 national consultations were held over a period of 3 weeks with the participation of more than 112 diverse organisations, including national and provincial government departments. It involved more than 532 persons (41 per cent male and 59 per cent female) of which 27 per cent were young people under the age of 30 years. The UN also provided technical support following the consultations to prepare the country's National Statement of Commitment and the Report on National Consultations which were submitted to the TES Secretariat.

Just Transition

South Africa is currently experiencing an intense energy crisis, causing major disruption to day-to-day business, food supply chains, the educational sector, other infrastructure systems such as water and transport – and the lives of ordinary people. This crisis also happens to coincide with the Just Energy Transition – Investment Plan (JET-IP). The UNCT has been engaging on JET through implementation of projects and by supporting the Government in its pathway toward energy transformation that is just for all. UN JET-related projects include reskilling; training; wind energy; provision of wind power turbines to communities; decommissioning of plants; community development in Mpumalanga; industrial energy efficiency; organic waste-to-energy for SMMEs; and accelerating cleantech innovation and entrepreneurship in SME.

Youth Skills Development

Through a Joint UN-Department of Communications and Digital Technologies programme, an assessment was conducted to examine the demand for and supply of digital skills in the country. Presented at various platforms, the findings of the assessment have enhanced the current understanding of key skills gaps in the digital economy and in relation to the inclusion of young people, especially Youth Not in Employment, Education and Training (YNEET). Informed by the findings of the assessment, a national Digital Skills Innovation Challenge Call was launched. The call identified training institutions to design and deliver innovative solutions to strengthen digital skills training curriculum for YNEET.

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has jointly organised with the UNDP, the UN RCO and the National Planning Commission a capacity building event on Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) as well as a similar event on National Voluntary Review (VNR) in Africa, the latter with the African Peer Review Mechanism. These initiatives have served as ground work that is part of the UN broader efforts to support the ongoing 2024 VNR process in South Africa, expected to culminate at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York in July next year.

Presidential Youth Employment Initiative

The UN also supported the goals of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, through the training of young people in basic and intermediary digital skills with the aim of enhancing skills development and job opportunities. This has contributed to placement of over 100 000 young South Africans between the ages of 18 and 29 in local businesses.

Migration Management

In February, the United Nations Country Team in South Africa, led by the Resident Coordinator, Mr. Nelson Muffuh together with the Government of South Africa, led by the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi; convened a Regional Roundtable on Migration (RRM). The agenda of the meeting was collectively designed (government and the UN) to ensure that key matters relating to expediting voluntary repatriation processes to countries of origin were fully discussed, and roles and responsibilities of all partners fully articulated and deliberated upon including clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the countries of origin and destination. In addition, the parties discussed efforts to enhance cooperation on civil registration systems and birth registration procedures between South Africa and neighbouring countries, particularly to reaffirm access to birth registration for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in South Africa.

ZEP Scenario Planning and Response

Following the announcement by the Minister of Home Affairs on the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit, the UN convened stakeholders to undertake a ZEP scenario planning and response plan. Some of areas of support identified to support the transition include:

- Reduce risks and ensure that human rights are upheld during the movement of ZEP holders and their families back to their country.
- Strengthen coordination and implementation of the return of Zimbabweans with the ZEP permit.
- Where deportation is used by the Government of South Africa, ensure that it is done so in safety, dignity, and as quickly as possible to avoid long periods of immigration detention.
- Strengthen measures to ensure the safety and rights of children of ZEP holders, including access to necessary documentation from the Government of South Africa and the Zimbabwean High Commission in South Africa.

Expenditure on the UNSDCF to date¹

Year	Expenditure in USD
2020	25 130 424
2021	41 322 619
2022	61 295 408
Total	127 748 451

¹ The UN is not a donor, however we are technical development partners to member states

Next Steps

- Key issues here include operationalizing the governance mechanism and the proposal to support this process includes:
 - convening the Ministerial Steering Committee;
 - co-signing the letters to the Government Co-Chair of the Result Groups

- The UN will also be conducting the final evaluation of the UNSDCF in 2024, this will contribute to the development of the strategic framework for 2026-2030.



CONTACT US:

United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UN House, Metro Park Building,
351 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 354 8096
Email: unic-pretoria@un.org
Designed by: UNIC Pretoria

Facebook: @UNinSouthAfrica
Twitter: @UNinSouthAfrica
Instagram: @UNinSouthAfrica
Website: <https://southafrica.un.org/>

