



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

14 August 2018

Dear Colleagues,

As we move firmly towards the implementation of the mandates of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, I wish to update you on the critical issue of the transition to a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system.

We have ahead of us a unique opportunity for the system to become more than the sum of its parts and deliver effectively on the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Resident Coordinator system lies at the heart of a repositioned system and its transformation is an absolute priority, as we rise to the occasion collectively to ensure that we are even more effective, cohesive and accountable partners to Member States in their route towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

I remain committed to ensuring a well-planned transition that guarantees business continuity and minimal disruption to your activities on the ground. The transition team is now in place to coordinate the implementation of all mandates to reposition the United Nations development system. It is working closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department of Management and the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO) to make sure all elements are in place for a successful transition. The team will continue to consult with you as the process unfolds.

I wish to take this opportunity to clarify a few critical aspects of the changes foreseen to the Resident Coordinator system, to ensure you have clarity on the way forward.

The operational transition of the Resident Coordinator system will be handled in three phases:

- First, the transition of UNDOCO, from UNDP into the Secretariat, and its progressive transformation will commence by 1 November 2018, to ensure you have the necessary support for transition efforts in each country office from January 2019 onwards.

Resident Coordinators of the United Nations

- Second, the functions of the Resident Coordinator will be separated from those of the UNDP Resident Representative, with the transition of the posts of all Resident Coordinators into the Secretariat by 1 January 2019.
- Third, the transition and strengthening of Resident Coordinator Offices will commence on 1 January 2019, for completion by January 2020. As a first step, staff contracts covering core coordination functions, currently funded by UNDOCO through the UNSDG cost-sharing mechanism, will start to be resourced through the Secretariat budget as of 1 January 2019. This will be followed by a comprehensive capacity review and a job matching exercise that will ensure a transformative process that brings all the offices of Resident Coordinators up to a minimum staffing “floor” to carry out the new roles expected of them.

As we prepare for the next steps, I want to reaffirm my full confidence in each and every one of you, and my determination to ensure that the momentum and institutional memory of the development operations of the United Nations are not lost during this transition period.

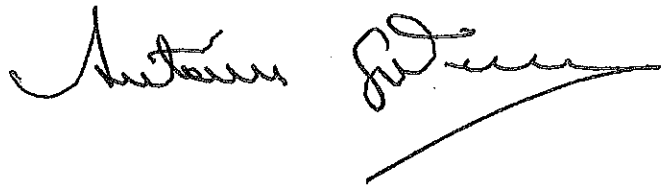
In this regard, all sitting Resident Coordinators will remain in their current Resident Coordinator posts for the normal duration of their current assignment, unless they choose otherwise. Any learning opportunities offered in the interim, such as a planned online certification course on the Sustainable Development Goals, should be understood as a learning opportunity, not a competency test. There will be more such offerings over the years ahead to continue to deepen development leadership skills not only for Resident Coordinators, but also for other members of the United Nations country teams or national counterparts.

I am conscious of our responsibility to ensure that you receive adequate support and resources to take on your expanded responsibilities from day one. This includes clear communications to Member States about the enhanced role of the Resident Coordinator, a minimum capacity in each office of the Resident Coordinator, a strong and fully operational UNDOCO, and enhanced management and accountability measures between Resident Coordinators and members of the United Nations country team. While the transition process will unfold over a period of 18 to 24 months, these initial measures will be put in place in the coming months, in the lead-up to January 2019.

You will be hearing shortly from the UNDP Administrator who will, inter alia, invite you to indicate whether you intend to remain as Resident Coordinator or return to your originating entity. For those wishing to remain as Resident Coordinator, I will then proceed to nominate you under the new arrangements, through an exchange of letters with your host government, effective 1 January 2019.

I am aware that the ongoing change process naturally raises some doubts and uncertainties. You can count on my absolute resolve to make this transition a success – the collective relevance of the United Nations development system depends on it. I trust that I can also count on your continued leadership and support as we move into a new era. I look forward to discussing the next steps and opportunities ahead with you in person, during the upcoming global meeting of Resident Coordinators, which is being planned on 18 and 19 October 2018 in New York.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

António Guterres