

# United Nations reform

## SUMMARY

At the 72nd United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 18 September 2017, 120 countries expressed their commitment to the reforms proposed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Since 1946, the UN has undergone a number of reforms either in whole or in part. The term 'reform' has proved troublesome for UN member states on account of its lack of clarity and the lack of consensus as to execution. This is particularly apparent in the scepticism expressed by the United States (US) in 2018 regarding the need for global governance, the importance of UN Security Council decisions such as the Iran nuclear deal, and the efficiency of the United Nations.

This briefing explains how the current reform differs from previous ones, in as much as it focuses on management and addresses the criticisms of a lack of accountability and transparency, ineffectiveness, and the deficit in trust between the organisation and its member states in the current system. The United Nations reform agenda centres on three key areas: development, management, and peace and security. First, development reform will bring a bold change to the UN development system in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This will be centred on the creation of a new generation of country teams led by an independent team of UN country experts ('resident coordinators'). Second, the simplification of processes, increased transparency and improved delivery of mandates will form the basis of a new management paradigm for the secretariat. Third, peace and security reform will be underpinned by placing priority on conflict prevention and peacekeeping, increasing the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and political missions.

Two years after its launch, the reform process is starting to bear fruit, with implementation set to begin in 2019 and a focus on streamlining, accountability, transparency and efficiency. However, the reform process does not make explicit mention of bolstering human rights. This briefing also explores the possibility of capitalising on the current reforms so as to boost the indivisibility of human rights, while taking stock of stakeholders' reactions to the UN reforms under way.



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## The issue

Since its establishment in [1945](#), the UN has been subject to a number of reforms, adapting it to the changing needs and expectations of the international system. Over the years, [former secretaries-general](#) have tasked subsidiary bodies with making proposals for reform. These [reforms](#) have encompassed a [variety of issues](#), including restructuring the permanent membership of the UN Security Council ([UNSC](#)), increasing UN [secretariat](#) transparency, accountability and efficiency, financial reform, calling for diversity and democracy through the implementation of a representative voting system in the General Assembly ([UNGA](#)), and reforming the [human rights](#) petition system, among [other examples](#).

However, member states have struggled with the term 'reform', as it lacks clarity, and it has been difficult to reach a consensus on its execution. A [schism](#) exists between countries calling for a larger presence of the organisation on the world stage and those that wish to roll back the UN's mandates and see it confined solely to humanitarian work. Most notably, on 25 September 2018, US President Donald Trump delivered a speech at the UNGA in which he [questioned](#) the need for global governance, the importance of UNSC decisions, such as the Iran nuclear deal, and the efficiency of the [UN Human Rights Council](#) – from which the US [withdrew](#) on 19 June 2018.

On 30 June 2017, the UN Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)) meeting received a [report](#) by the Secretary-General announcing the possibility of repositioning the UN development system in order to deliver on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.<sup>1</sup> This was the first step in the current reform. Soon afterwards [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) formally inaugurated his reform agenda at a [town hall](#) meeting on 26 July 2017. There, he expressed his [wish](#) to reform the UN as being based on a 'need to improve, for we are under a moral obligation to do as much as we can as best as we can'. He set out three areas for reform: the development system, management, and the 'peace and security architecture' by means of internal review teams working in unison.

Guterres' intentions for the development system centred on achieving greater coordination and accountability in the workings of agencies on the ground. Regarding the peace and security architecture, he argued that although profound change was necessary, it should be facilitated within the auspices of management reform. Management reform was defined as reorganisation in order to deliver better on mandates. Guterres identified six [areas](#) in dire need of change within the UN's processes and structures. He pointed to slow and unresponsive service delivery owing to a fragmented and weak management structure. He drew the assembly's attention to the prevalent trust deficit among member states and UN staff, as well as to inadequate resources and ineffective implementation of mandates. Lastly, the Secretary-General aimed to curb the lack of transparency and accountability afflicting the organisation. The goals of the UN reform agenda, were eventually endorsed by the UN member states, included enabling more freedom of movement, more decentralisation, more effectiveness and increased transparency and accountability.

Guterres' speech addressed systemic issues with the organisation's structure that have been the focus of [criticism](#) of the UN for decades. Among a myriad of issues, two stand out for the purposes of this briefing. First, the UN has been accused of duplication, whereby experts state that the absence of a systematic overview has led to a proliferation of monitoring bodies and committees, overlapping treaties and inconsistent jurisprudence. Moreover, according to one [expert](#), the UN has been reproached for its inability to deliver on promises, declarations and mandates. This includes failure to realise the [high ideals on human rights](#) proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and inability to keep the peace and handle conflicts around the world.

In July 2017, at the town hall presentation of his reform vision, Guterres clearly [stated](#) that the reforms would be guided by the urgent need to reduce (and eliminate) 'horizontal and vertical fragmentation between the pillars of the UN'. He announced that initial strategic documents would be submitted by the UNGA in 2017 and that a consultation would take place throughout 2017 and 2018 with the initial intention of having a new system by January 2019. (See timeline in annexe.)

During a high-level event, parallel to the 72nd UNGA on 18 September 2017, 120 countries agreed on a [10-point political declaration](#) expressing their commitment to the reform agenda. The shared goal was to bring the organisation into the [21st century](#), i.e. equipping it to tackle the current challenges facing the world. As Guterres [stated](#) during an informal meeting on 27 November 2018, 'The goal of reform is a 21st-century United Nations, focused more on people and less on process, more on delivery and less on bureaucracy. The true test of reform will be measured in tangible results in the lives of the people we serve – and the trust of those who support our work'.

## UN reform agenda: development, management and peace and security

### UN development system reform

With its 34 entities and an annual revenue of US\$26.7 billion in 2015, the UN development system is by far the biggest arm of the UN and, by all accounts, an important actor in the multilateral system. However [experts](#) agree that its fragmentation and inefficiency have grown beyond what is acceptable, seriously limiting the system's performance, that its functions are outdated and that, above all, as [ECOSOC](#) states, the 2030 Agenda necessitates a new way of working to assist UN member states in their transformation toward sustainability.

On 21 December 2017, Guterres submitted his [report](#) 'Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet' to the UNGA and ECOSOC. The restructuring of the UN development system is part of broader efforts initiated by Guterres to streamline prevention at the centre of the UN. The report proposes seven key areas for reform of the development system, stating that major changes are required to provide more 'coherent, accountable and effective support' for the 2030 Agenda.

### Seven key proposals for development system reform

1. A new generation of UN country teams (UNCT), to be demand-driven, skilled, and tailored to meet country-specific priorities
2. A reinvigorated resident coordinator (RC) system, emphasising sustainable development

The RC system coordinates all organisations of the UN dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of the nature of their presence in the country. The RC system aims to bring together the various UN development system (UNDS) entities to improve the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of the UN's operational activities for development at country level.

3. A coordinated and restructured regional approach to support work in the field more effectively
4. A renewed space for UN member states to ensure coherent, transparent and accountable results underpinned by system-wide evaluations
5. A stronger UN institutional response and system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda
6. A funding compact to bring better quality, quantity and predictability of resources coupled with increased transparency to deliver on the 2030 Agenda
7. Necessary concrete steps to accelerate the alignment of the development system with the 2030 Agenda

UN member states [supported](#) the vision and direction of Guterres' reform package for the [development system](#). On 31 May 2018, the UNGA adopted [Resolution 72/279](#) on the 'Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system'. The UN is expected to implement this change process within a timeframe of two to four years. The establishment of the UNCT and the RC system is currently under way with the aid of a transition team in order to make the process as smooth as possible with a view to full implementation by 2019.

## Implications of restructuring the development system

The repositioning of the UN development system should [ensure](#) that it can provide tailored assistance for individual countries in the most effective and efficient manner. Resolution 72/279 calls for the separation of the resident coordinator's functions in each country from those of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative. This has required a set of new adjustments to the UN, as set out in Resolution A/72/L.52 affecting five areas.

The **first** key area concerns changes at country level. The resolution outlines a new 'generation' of UN country teams centred on strategic plans. These strategic plans are to be developed in consultation with governments and led by an impartial [UN resident coordinator](#). The country teams will report to their agencies as well as to the resident coordinator. This structure will allow UN member states to participate in system-wide actions with greater transparency and accountability for results achieved through evaluations. This reorganisation is aimed at providing greater cohesion, accountability and leadership while maximising interagency planning and administration.

The **second** area involves a coordinated restructured regional approach to complement and support work on the ground. The regional level must offer a platform to deliver on integrated policy advice, norms and regional priorities. The Regional Economic Commissions need to be re-profiled and the linkages between the UN and these commissions strengthened.

The **third** priority area agreed upon by member states involves a [funding compact](#) to improve the quality, quantity and predictability of resources in order to deliver the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda more quickly. The UN development system funding base is currently highly fragmented, leading UN member states to define specific mutual accountability targets. Although the United States has already withdrawn its funding from the UN Relief and Works Agency supporting [Palestinian refugees](#) and the UN Population Fund promoting family planning, the Trump administration is calling for further [budget reductions](#) for the [UN International Children's Emergency Fund](#), the [UN Development Programme](#), and [UN peacekeeping](#). Meanwhile, under the forthcoming EU multiannual financial framework (MFF), the EU is expected to increase its budget to honour its previous commitments to the UN and in order to deliver on its core values, by increasing the budgets for humanitarian aid and crisis response. Currently, the EU Member States are collectively the largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, accounting for [32%](#) in 2017 (the 28 EU Member States' contributions represent almost [30%](#) of the regular UN budget).

The **fourth** pillar of the resolution relates to the UN's partnerships. The UN member states have agreed to take further steps to strengthen the UN's institutional response and approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda. This involves strengthening the capacity of the UNCTs and other teams responsible for partnerships, in order to increase the organisation's engagement with civil society, the private sector, and financial institutions for instance.

The **fifth** and final axis of the resolution states that while primary accountability will remain at country level between the UNCT and the host government, the UN development system will improve its multilateral oversight of system-wide activities. The resolution highlights the preferential role of ECOSOC working alongside executive boards in order to strengthen and ensure the coherence of collective actions and decision-making.

Changes the development system reform will bring:

1. A reinvigorated RC system
2. A new generation of UNCTs
3. A revamped UNDS regional approach
4. Stronger Economic and Social Council and UNDS executive boards for New York entities
5. A funding compact

## Restructuring the UN peace and security pillar

As Séverine Autesserre, of Barnard College, Columbia University, and the author of *Peaceland* and the forthcoming *On the Frontlines of Peace* wrote in her article [‘The Crisis of Peacekeeping’](#) published early this year in *Foreign Affairs*, in nearly 50 conflict zones around the world, [1.5 billion people](#) are

living under the threat of violence. In many cases, the primary enforcers of order are neither the police officers nor government soldiers but rather the [blue-helmeted troops](#) of the United Nations. Despite [US President Trump's decision](#) to cut UN funds, the UN has deployed more than 78 000 soldiers and 25 000 civilians scattered across 14 countries. UN peacekeepers make up the second-largest military force deployed abroad, after the US military.

As one expert [states](#): 'the UN's strategy favours top-down deals struck with elites and fixates on elections. But that may neglect what could be the other main component of their approach: embracing bottom-up strategies that draw on local knowledge and letting the people themselves determine how best to promote peace'. Guterres, following his pledge in the town hall address of December 2017, submitted a report to the UNGA on 13 October 2017 on 'Restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar' ([A/72/525](#)). Soon after, the UNGA adopted the resolution on 20 December 2017 ([A/RES/72/199](#)). This forms the second key pillar of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. The goals set out prioritise conflict prevention, peace keeping, and greater effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and political missions, by moving towards a single integrated peace and security pillar. This would be aligned more closely with the development and human rights pillars, so as to foster coherence and cross-pillar coordination.

## Five areas of peace and security reform

- > Creation of a department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and a department of Peace Operations
- > Establishment of a single political-operational structure under Assistant Secretaries-General with regional responsibilities, reporting to the Under-Secretaries-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for Peace Operations
- > Establishment of a Standing Principals Group of the Secretary General and the Under-Secretaries-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for Peace Operations
- > Enhancement of certain priority areas to ensure coherence and coordination across the peace and security pillar
- > Introduction of several non-structural changes in the way the peace and security pillar works

## Two new departments

The **Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs** (DPPA) will combine the strategic, political and operational responsibilities of the current department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the peacebuilding responsibilities of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). The new DPPA will have global responsibility for political and peacebuilding issues and will manage a variety of commitments within conflicts, such as: a more holistic approach to conflict prevention and resolution, electoral assistance, peacebuilding, and sustaining peace. The DPPA is geared to provide strategic, political, operational and management advice, and direction for political missions.

The **Department of Peace Operations** (DPO) will serve as an integrated 'centre of excellence' for UN peace operations. The department will be responsible for preventing, responding to and managing international conflict. Equally, the DPO will be charged with peace keeping within countries; in line with peace operation mandates. These mandates may include facilitating and implementing political arrangements, providing integrated strategic and political management advice, direction and support of peace operations. Moreover, the new department will be in charge of developing political, security and integrated strategies that will lead to an integrated analysis and overall planning of peace operations.

## Management reforms

During the UNGA's Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee) meeting on 4 December 2017, Secretary-General Guterres relayed his report findings regarding the pitfalls of the secretariat management, highlighting six reasons why administrative reform was necessary within the UN system: slow and unresponsive service delivery; a fragmented management structure;

weak performance management; gaps in resources; a lack of transparency and accountability; and a trust deficit between UN member states and the secretariat. In order to make improvements and achieve a paradigm shift, Guterres proposed seven avenues for action.

**First**, he proposed switching from a biennial to an annual budget, and shortening the planning and budgetary cycle from five to three years. This change will simplify and streamline the planning and budget cycle while securing coherence as activities will be clearly linked with legislation and their individual mandates. Moreover, these budget documents would hold programme managers accountable for their effective implementation, while allowing member states to be more involved in assessing the performance of UN action (or inaction).

The **second** item proposed by the Secretary-General involved granting additional authority to the Chief Administrative Officer to redeploy resources of up to 20 % per section as necessary within parts of the same budget line, to ensure that it fulfils its original objectives and is not used for other purposes. This will ensure, for example, that budgets allocated to development should only be used for such purposes.

The **third** proposal was to extend the scope for 'unforeseen and extraordinary expenses', effectively enabling the UN to respond rapidly to unanticipated events in security and peace as well as development and human rights.

**Fourth**, the Secretary-General proposed an increase in transparency and more frequent reporting to member states of monitoring, evaluation, programme and financing performance, and resource use. More streamlined communication would strengthen the culture of performance management, ensure effective use of resources and increase trust between member states and the organisation.

**Fifth**, the establishment of two new departments, the [Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance](#) as well as the [Department of Operational Support](#), would eliminate overlaps, and improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery.

**Sixth**, the use of a global service delivery model for administrative transactions would centralise and improve speed of delivery.

**Lastly**, the Secretary-General proposed to streamline and simplify human resources ensuring efficiency of resource management in order to achieve gender parity and geographic diversity within the organisation.

A number of these issues were [reviewed](#) and subsequent proposals were discussed at the UNGA from 2017 to 2018. As a result, the management reform was embodied in resolutions [A/RES/72/266](#) 'Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations' and [A/RES/72/236](#) 'Operational activities for development of the United Nations system', adopted in December 2017.

## Implications of the management reform

As previously mentioned, the 72nd UNGA adopted two resolutions on increased management and administrative efficiency in the UN system (A/RES/72/266 and 72/236). These were later reinforced through the resolution 'Shifting the management paradigm in the UN' ([A/RES/72/266B](#)) adopted on 5 July 2018. Since then, multiple progress reports regarding the accountability of the UN secretariat have been under way.

## Six priority areas for management reform

The six key characteristics identified in the three resolutions (A/RES/72/266; 236 and 266B) spearheading the management reforms run in parallel with the six issues identified by the Secretary-General at the UNGA's fifth committee meeting on 4 December 2017. Resolutions 266(B) and 236 envisage the elimination of duplicative functions of UN bodies, the establishment of a clearer division of roles and responsibilities as well as appropriate checks and balances. The centrepiece of resolution A/72/266 is the creation of two new departments that would support the entire UN secretariat at global, regional and national levels. The **Department of Management, Strategy,**

**Policy and Compliance (DMSPC)** and the **Department of Operational Support (DOS)** would be created by reorganising existing departments, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Management. The two new entities would employ the existing resources of previous departments and, therefore, the restructuring of departments would be, to a large degree, cost-neutral. The new entities are designed to ensure that UN management structures do more to support and achieve effective programme and mandate delivery.

## EU-UN partnership

The EU is devoted to reinforcing and maintaining the UN's credible position on the international stage. As such, the EU's priority at the UNGA in 2018 has been to uphold and strengthen UN reform as well as to support the Secretary-General in order to deliver on the aforementioned proposals. The EU, steered by the [EU global strategy for foreign and security policy](#) as well as other frameworks [defending global cooperation](#), is in favour of a rules-based global order, with the UN at its centre. The commitment to effective multilateralism is a central element of the EU's external action, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. On a number of global governance issues, the EU works closely with the UN: becoming a key partner in the UN development goals, human rights promotion and in addressing climate change. The European Union won its status as permanent observer in the UN in 1974. While the EU does not have voting rights, it coordinates its voting within the UNGA's six committees as well as other agencies and bodies. The EU is therefore represented alongside its 28 Member States at the UN headquarters in New York. In 2011, the UNGA adopted Resolution [A/65/276](#) upgrading the EU's observer status, allowing the EU to present common positions, make interventions, present proposals and participate in general debates.

The multilateral partnership between the EU and UN stems from an overlap in their fundamental [values](#) and goals. These include the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations based on the principles of equal rights and self-determination, the promotion of international cooperation in finding solutions for economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, as well as the promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European project is founded on a commitment to uphold multilateralism and these values. Articles 3 and 21 of the [Treaty on European Union](#) enshrine the promotion of the EU's norms and closer partnerships. As a result, the EU is currently [the only non-state participant](#) to be party to more than [50 UN multilateral agreements and conventions](#). In September 2018, during the 73rd UNGA, the EU [focused](#) on three priority areas: peace and security, a common positive agenda with the promotion and protection of human rights at the heart of multilateralism, as well as an expanding global engagement on topics such as: climate change, migration, counterterrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The three pillars of the UN reform run in parallel with the EU-UN [eight strategic partnerships](#) for peace operations and crisis management for 2019 to 2021. These are to:

- 1 establish an EU-UN collaborative platform on women, peace and security;
- 2 strengthen cooperation between missions and operations in the field;
- 3 assess how to best to plan and execute complementary transitions of missions and operations;
- 4 further facilitate EU Member States' contributions and support for UN peace operations and for the UN Secretary-General's peacekeeping action;
- 5 strengthen the use of preventive instruments in peace operations such as mediation, early warning and security sector reform, coordinating political messages and strategic communication;

Changes the management reform will bring:

1. Faster and more responsive service delivery
2. Greater coherence in management structures
3. A stronger performance management culture
4. Effective management of resources for mandate implementation
5. Enhanced transparency and accountability
6. Increased trust between UN member states and the secretariat

- 6 extend cooperation on policing, the rule of law, and security sector reform to include also justice and correctional services and assess possibilities for cooperation on civilian rapid response;
- 7 enhance cooperation with and support for African-led peace operations and explore possibilities to deepen trilateral cooperation with the African Union;
- 8 strengthen the performance of peace operations on the ground through intensified cooperation on training and capacity building, including exercises.

The three pillars of EU engagement within the UNGA are at the heart of the [statement](#) made by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, on 16 May 2018, at a joint press conference with UN Secretary-General Guterres, reaffirming the commitment of the EU and the Commission to the UN's multilateral system and their firm support for the UN Secretary-General's reform initiative.

## European Parliament position

The European Parliament has been vocal in its support of the UN and in its work on the deepening of multilateral relations between the EU and the UN. The current UN reform agenda addresses the EU's three priority areas presented at the 73rd UNGA (September 2018). The EU's first priority – expanding global engagement in international issues – is covered by the first reform agenda, development system reform. The second priority – to promote crisis management and ensure peace and security – is addressed in the second reform, restructuring the peace and security pillar. However, the last priority of the EU – the promotion and protection of human rights – is not pursued by a tailored reform process.

Parliament raised these points in its [recommendation](#) of 5 July 2018 to the Council on the 73rd session of the UNGA. While addressing these priorities and calling on UN member states to uphold their commitments to the reform concerning peace and security, conflict prevention and mediation, and development, Parliament notes that human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. It recommends that in view of the implementation of its reform, both the EU and the UN firmly condemn the disturbing global trend towards the marginalisation and denial of human rights and democracy in order to counter any negative trends. Parliament urges all UN member states to ratify and effectively implement all core UN human rights conventions. These conventions include the UN Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol, the Optional Protocols to the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the [International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) establishing complaint and inquiry mechanisms. This would be important, in the context of the UN reforms underway, to ensure full compliance with the reporting obligations under these instruments and the commitment to cooperate in good faith with UN human rights mechanisms. Parliament also recalls that the UN needs to make sure in its current reform process that human rights reforms continue to be fully integrated within its three pillars of reform as this would further support the mainstreaming of the human rights dimension in the UN's work.

### Milestones of EU-UN partnership

1974:	EU becomes permanent observer of UN
1991:	<a href="#">First non-state entity with voting rights</a> in two UN bodies: the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (since 1991) and the World Trade Organization (since 1995)
2003:	Joint UN-EU declaration on cooperation in crisis management
2007:	Joint statement on UN-EU cooperation in crisis management
2011:	UNGA approves EU's observer with enhanced participation status
2012-2014:	Joint action plan to enhance EU common security and defence policy (CSDP) support for UN peacekeeping
2015-2018:	Priorities on strengthening EU-UN partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management
2017:	Launch of 'Spotlight' initiative targeting violence against women
2018:	Council conclusions on UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management for 2019-2021
2019-2021:	Priorities to reinforce the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management



## Stakeholders' positions

A number of NGOs are advocating an inclusive and effective 2020 UN Summit in order to build on the agenda for a renewed UN. These NGOs include the [World Federalist Movement](#), the [Stimson Centre](#), [CIVICUS](#), the [World Trust](#) and [Democracy without Borders](#). They are calling for a General Assembly-led and adequately prepared process involving a range of stakeholders, including UN member states, UN officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and scholars. Under the tutelage of Democracy without borders, the group of NGOs has formed a common voice through which to [express](#) concern about the under-resourced UN system, currently unable to respond adequately to the challenges facing the international community. They highlight increasing injustice and political violence; persistent poverty, growing inequality and the threat to global ecosystems as major points for action.

The group has named four priorities: to support and advance the measures initiated by Guterres; to align UN agencies, programmes and expertise to meet country needs; to further integrate regional organisation within the UN system; and to review a wide-range of proposals to improve outdated UN funding systems. In particular, the umbrella group highlights that as the UN's 75th anniversary approaches on 24 October 2020, the international system should recognise the current widespread crisis in multilateralism. In order to address these concerns, the group aims to echo the anxieties of fellow stakeholders and build on synergies in order to capitalise on the 2020 Summit and reinforce UN reform. To this end, as a way forward, they propose a 'call to action' for a 'people-centred' UN; in order for the organisation to better reflect the views of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process and not only the views of member states. The group's ambitious plan constitutes a push by civil society to improve world governance and demonstrate that a bold outcome is possible when 'the views of people around the world are integral to a preparatory process'.

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## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> The December 2016 UNGA was marked by the adoption of [Resolution 71/243](#) on the 2017 to 2020 [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review](#) (QCPR), leading to a policy instrument aligning the UN development system with the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Afterwards, Secretary-General Guterres put forward detailed proposals for reform of the UN development system, in line with the QCPR mandate.

## Annex: Timeline of UN reform process

- 30 June 2017:** Secretary-General's report 'Repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda- Ensuring a better future for all'
- 27 September 2017:** Secretary-General's reports 'Ensuring a better future for all' (A/72/492) (MR) and shifting the management paradigm: improving and streamlining programme planning and budget process (A/72/492/Add.1)
- 13 October 2017:** Guterres proposes restructuring the United Nations peace and security pillar in report A/72/525
- 21 December 2017:** Guterres releases his reform agenda – development system report A/72/684-E/2018/7; UNGA adoption of resolution 72/199 on 'Restructuring of the UN peace and security pillar'; UNGA adoption of resolution 72/236 on 'Operational activities for development of the UN system'
- 24 December 2017:** UNGA adopts resolution 'Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: comparative assessment of human resources structures' (A/72/266)
- 21 March 2018:** report of the Secretary-General on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: implementing a new management architecture for improved effectiveness and strengthened accountability (A/72/492/Add.2)
- 31 May 2018:** UNGA adopts resolution 72/279 (A/72/L.52) 'Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system'
- 26 June 2018:** Guterres appoints a transition team for development system reform, to work under UN Deputy-General Amina Mohammed and be headed by Robert Piper (UNDP, BERA)
- 27 June 2018:** Amina Mohammed presents 24-month implementation plan and launches the series of informal discussions on the selection of [new 'resident coordinators'](#)
- 5 July 2018:** UNGA adopts resolution A/72/262 'Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018 to 2019'; UNGA 72/262 endorses the establishment of Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations; resolution adopted by UNGA on shifting of management paradigm in 72/266B
- 11 July 2018:** creation of Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System, following from 72/279 mandate
- 31 July 2018:** Secretary-General appoints Jens Wandel, Special Advisor on Reforms
- 31 August 2018:** final draft of implementation plan for inception of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System is presented, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning the UN development system
- 5 September 2018:** Guterres releases A/73/366 'Shifting the management paradigm in the UN: comparative assessment of human resources structures'
- 11 September 2018:** report on financing the UN Development System launched - Funding Compact
- 12 September 2018:** Guterres presents set of proposals for reforming UN management structure (A/73/372)
- 28 November 2018:** UNGA approves budget for Resident Coordinator System Reform
- 7 December 2018:** UNDP selects 126 UNDP Resident Representatives in order to separate UN resident coordinators from UNDP

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