

End-of-Cycle Evaluation

**United Nations Multi-Country  
Sustainable Development  
Framework (MSDF)  
2017-2021**

MAY 2021

## Central America and the Caribbean



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAAH!	Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BFHI	Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CCREEE	Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIP	Country Implementation Plans
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSS	CARICOM's Statistical System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DaO	Delivering as One
DCO	Development Coordination Office
DPG	Development Partners Group
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECPDG	Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group
EEP	Emergency Employment Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gas
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons

HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	International Development Partner
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMPACS	Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JNSC	Joint National/United Nations Steering Committees
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MCO	Multi Country Office
MSDF	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PMT	Programme Management Teams
PoC	Persons of Concern
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Regional Coordination Meeting
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RG	Results Groups

RMETT	Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Task Team
RSDS	Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics
RTT	Regional Task Teams
SAMOA	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDU	Sustainable Development Unit
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIP	Sub-regional Implementation Plans
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SWAP	UN System-Wide Action Plan
TB	Tuberculosis
TCU	Technical Cooperation Unit
TeS	Technical Score
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToS	Total Score
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance
UNDCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIC	United Nations Information Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLIREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNS	United Nations System
VNR	Voluntary National Reviews
VPN	Virtual Policy Networks
WFP	World Food Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the main findings of the evaluation of the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) 2017-2021. The focus of the evaluation is on the activities, achievements and results of all the resident and non-resident UN agencies in the period 2017-2020. The report examines whether the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) have prioritized support and contributed to the development of the respective countries and territories. The evaluation was conducted by an international evaluator and a research assistant, working closely with the UNCTs in the region.

### Relevance

MSDF priorities are defined in quite broad terms and as such they are overall aligned with regional and national priorities, which are also broadly defined by CARICOM and national governments. What adds to the relevance of the MSDF is also the fact that the formulation process described in the document has been inclusive and participatory, enabling a range of government and non-governmental stakeholders to become involved. It should also be noted that the MSDF was formulated in a way that enabled the agencies to adapt their programmes flexibly to the rapidly evolving resulting after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the boundaries between what is regional and what is national should be clearly demarcated in the new MSDF. In the current cycle, UN organizations like ECLAC have encountered challenges with the way the MSDF is structured, as the CIP format does not fit ECLAC's nature of operations which is regional – and, actually, extends way beyond the borders of the MSDF region. While on paper the MSDF document is quite relevant to regional and national priorities, in terms of implementation not all UN agencies perceive their programmes aligned with the MSDF.

National counterparts appreciate the development contributions of the UN system, especially the work on vulnerable and disadvantaged people. But they also indicated that some interventions are too small and fragmented to ensure significant impact on the key challenges that the region faces. Civil society and private sector representatives were more critical on the quality of their engagement with the activities of the UN system. Most of them reported being engaged only sporadically and typically on the basis of specific projects by individual agencies. They noted that the UN has not put in place a stable and cohesive mechanism for the continued engagement of civil society and private sector representatives at the regional level, but also in all countries/territories that fall under the purview of the MSDF.

Overall, there is an impression among stakeholders that in the upcoming MSDF the UN should be able to find a better balance between the regional and national approaches. Several participants thought that the UN has not been able to articulate the added value at the national level, nor at the regional level. In order to be effective and capitalize on economies of scale, the UN needs to articulate a stronger value added at regional level and be able to translate that effectively into the country-level offer. UN's value proposition to its counterparts and beneficiaries should also be grounded in a more effective reporting of results, ideally linked to regional and country SDG. Throughout this process, the UN should maintain greater openness not only at the formulation stage, but also during implementation, ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders, in particular civil society and the private sector.

### Effectiveness

A systematic assessment of progress made by the UN system in the region based on the MSDF indicators was not possible under this evaluation because of the incomplete nature of the results

framework. Not only are MSDF baselines and targets missing, but also the quality of the indicators in the results framework is inadequate and relevant data in the respective countries/territories is lacking and/or not captured effectively in the UN-Info system. Going forward, the UN has an opportunity to strengthen its work in support of data collection and analysis activities of respective countries/territories. Quality data can be used not only to ensure better targeting of interventions and monitoring of results of UN's work, but will also contribute to improving the availability and quality of data in the region. The improvement of SDG frameworks in the region presents the UN and its partners with an opportunity to strengthen statistical and monitoring capacities of the countries and territories involved by expanding data sources and collecting higher-frequency and higher-quality data.

Also, reporting for results has been challenging. At the regional (MSDF) level, there has been only one biennial report for 2017-2018. The report provides a narrative of the main activities of the UN agencies in the region, but does not provide an assessment of the results based on the MSDF results framework. At the country/sub-regional level there is no consistency in reporting, although the MSDF document clearly stipulates the requirement for six annual results reports by each RCO. Furthermore, reports at the country/sub-regional level lack solid assessments of results based on predetermined and well-identified indicators, baselines and targets. Annual reports cannot be considered a valid 'accountability' instrument until such time as they mandate the use of formally-approved MSDF indicators at the outcome level. Further, no evaluations or assessments of UN programmes (under the one UN framework) have been conducted prior to this one, neither at the regional (MSDF) level, nor at the country/sub-regional (CIP/SIP) level.

In key areas, UN's footprint has been considerable and has furthered results that are noted in this report. One important area of work has been on establishing a child-friendly education system, reversing teenage pregnancy, integrating adolescent mothers in schools, promoting healthy school feeding, promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age, improving access to fair and equitable social protection, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities. In the area of health, the focus of UN's work has been on maternal mortality, adolescents birth rate, neonatal mortality, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and increases in the incidence of non-communicable diseases, well-being, nutrition and food security, and water and sanitation. From early 2020 and onward, a major theme of the UN's work in the region has been the Covid-19 response. The UN has also contributed to the strengthening of capacities of public policy and rule of law institutions and civil society organizations to ensure equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety. The UN has also supported the development of policies and programmes for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and universal access to clean and sustainable energy in place. In addition, it has supported inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted for the conservation, the restoration and the use of ecosystems and natural resources.

The UN has provided significant support to the most vulnerable groups, in line with the key principle of "Leaving No One Behind". Those that have benefited the most from the UN programme have been the neediest and most vulnerable groups. Contributions towards gender equality have been significant, involving interventions that have been targeted, multi-sectoral and sustained over time. In general, the agencies reported to employing gender sensitive approaches in the preparation of programme strategies. According to national counterparts involved in this evaluation, two vulnerable groups that could have received more support and attention are persons with disabilities and migrants.

### Efficiency

Overall, as has been outlined in this section, the coordination infrastructure that underpins the MSDF does not function effectively and remains underdeveloped. While a number of coordination structures were put in place at the beginning of the MSDF cycle, they were subsequently discontinued or not

maintained operational. Some stakeholders involved in the preparation of the MSDF see two distinct phases in how the MSDF infrastructure has operated. The phase prior to the delinking of the UNRCO functions from UNDP (in 2019) has been characterized by efforts to establish some of the infrastructure described in the MSDF document. Thus, a number of task teams and VPNs were initiated, efforts were made to develop a result framework, etc. However, during the transition to the new coordination format based on the UN reform agenda many of these initiatives stopped functioning. A number of factors seem to have played a role in the creation of the situation described above. Certainly, the lack of capacities in the RCOs until recently has hindered serious efforts at addressing coordination shortcoming. This was the case not only before the reform when the RCO institutions were weak and poorly staffed, but also until recently when the RCOs beefed up their capacities with staff. Another factor seems to have been the change of leadership and staff and the weak mechanisms that were in place for storing the institutional memory. With the RCOs now invigorated and with more resources available, there should be a coordinated and concentrated effort between the UN and the respective government to establish strong foundations for a permanent and efficient functioning of these coordination structures.

With regards to planning, there is some confusion among UN staff about the relationship between the MSDF and CIPs. In addition, the agencies have their own planning frameworks agreed with their government counterparts, further complicating the planning architecture. Ideally, all agencies operating in a particular country should derive their annual work plans from the CIP, ensuring full alignment between the two. However, based on agency responses to this evaluation's questionnaire, very few agencies admit to doing that. Furthermore, programming timeframes for the various agencies are not harmonized, leading to a patchwork of planning pieces that do not fit uniformly together. This situation often leads to a siloed planning process with individual agencies focused on their own "country programme documents" and demands from their own headquarters. To further complicate matters, the planning process of the various government entities has its own logic that does not align with the planning approach of the agencies, creating further pressures in favour of a siloed planning approach for the agencies.

Joint implementation between agencies and across national/territorial borders remains limited. Achieving stronger cooperation in the implementation of the MSDF is not easy given the complexity of the context, the way the UN system at the regional level is structured, the weakness of the coordination infrastructure and the lack of strong incentives for collaboration. Also, the agencies' different rules and procedures make cooperation challenging. For all the challenges, there are opportunities for UN to create incentives for greater cooperation and more joint activities among the agencies.

With regards to resource mobilization, the MSDF document identified a resource gap expected to be mobilized collectively or individually by the agencies in addition to their so called "secure" or core funding. A regional resource mobilization strategy under the aegis of the Regional Steering Committee has not materialized, although efforts have been made to develop resource mobilization strategies by some individual RCOs involved with the MSDF. This patchwork of resource mobilization strategies by agency, country or region needs to be rationalized and aligned more effectively. Given the limited development resources available for the upper or middle-income countries/territories in the region, it will be important for the agencies to avoid competition for donor funds and partnerships. Due to the incompleteness of the financial information available in the UN-Info system, the evaluation was not able to conclude with an exact figure about the amount of resources mobilized or spent under the MSDF. The UN system at a fundamental level should be able to report in full accountability on the amount of money it has mobilized and spent in the region as a whole. This will require a solid data entry and quality assurance process for the financial information that is captured in the UN-Info system.

The UN has a good reputation and high visibility among government officials both at the national and sub-national level. While individually the agencies have established good relations and cooperation with their respective counterparts, cooperation between the UN as a whole and regional or country/territory bodies can be further improved. The cooperation framework will benefit from stronger coordination between the Government and the UN system. Given the upper and middle-income level status of the countries and territories in the region and reduced donor and UN core resources, it will be important for the UN to explore partnerships with government partners on the basis of cost-sharing.

The engagement of the UN with civil society at the regional level remains limited. Civil society representatives referred to the UN programme across the region as too “*state-centric*”. There was general perception that civil society is not invited in the coordination meetings, which generally involve only the government. CSO representatives are interested to participate in joint steering committee and results groups meetings at the country/sub-regional level. Most CSOs had no experience being involved in the formulation of any form of UN programming, be it at the regional or country/sub-regional level. Very few had any information about the results achieved by the UN, especially at the regional level. Support for capacity development of the civil society sector appears to be quite limited. The UN should engage civil society more effectively and in a more structured way, involving greater coordination among agencies. The fora for the engagement of national stakeholders should be opened to civil society representatives. CSOs should be involved more actively in the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of results. The UN should also explore greater opportunities for community-based interventions and service delivery through CSOs. Lastly, it will be important to have a more coherent approach at the UN level (across agencies and countries/territories) for how support to civil society, especially capacity building assistance, is designed and delivered.

With regards to regional cooperation, the UN has not fully tapped that potential for cooperation with regional bodies. Although initial attempts were made to formalize the UN’s relationship with CARICOM, cooperation with this crucial regional body has not lived up to its potential. UN’s engagement with CARICOM has been limited to high-level contacts, primarily taking place through the biennial joint high-level meetings and CARICOM’s participation in the UN’s Annual Regional Coordination Meeting. The relationship with CARICOM is not based on a joint strategy or work plan. There are no specific commitments made by both sides that are tracked and monitored at the regional over time. Hence, there is no consistent follow up on the UN-CARICOM engagement. At the practical level, engagement with CARICOM has taken place more at the agency level, with individual UN agencies engaging with CARICOM on specific projects related to specific countries. The same situation described above applies to the OECS and other regional bodies. Participants in this evaluation thought that there is definitely a need for a more structured relationship between the UN and regional bodies, especially CARICOM.

### Sustainability

The limited availability and sustainability of development finance in the region emerged as one of the main challenges identified by UN agencies. The UN needs to expand its financial capacity to respond to the demands of national partners for support and expertise. UN staff surveyed for this evaluation think that vertical Funds (i.e. GEF, Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, etc.) and pooled funding are two sources of funding that should be explored more effectively in the new MSDF cycle. Also, private sector financing was identified by respondents as an opportunity that should be further pursued. Resource mobilization in the region and the respective countries/territories should be placed on a sounder and more strategic footing.

The MSDF represents for the UN an opportunity to facilitate the transfer of expertise and knowledge residing not only within the UN system, but also outside of it, and bringing it to bear on the development challenges and SDGs prioritized by the respective countries/territories. However, due to the fragmented

nature of delivery of the agencies, this knowledge and expertise remains scattered across territorial and agency boundaries and is not deployed efficiently and rapidly across agency and country/territory boundaries. Apart from the joint programming reviewed in previous sections of this report and the joint meetings organized at the country/sub-regional level, there is limited exchange of technical expertise and knowledge under the MSDF. There is no actual platform or any structured approach for how this exchange should take place in the context of the MSDF. The UN system should be a lot more effective in how it manages the available expertise and knowledge, especially in a regional setting like the MSDF.

One challenge with the sustainability of UN projects is that sometimes they do not get replicated and scaled up. Sometimes pilots do not get fully integrated into national structures, which can cater to them sustainably. Another challenge is that information about pilots and replication is not easily available. The UN should track the performance of pilots over time – the lessons they generate during the piloting stage and the extent to which they get replicated and scaled up. As part of the monitoring system, the UN should seek to track pilot initiatives over time and after a pilot's lifetime. The UN should document more effectively results, lessons, experiences, and good practices and share them more widely. RCOs should coordinate more closely the approaches taken by the agencies on piloting. Another challenge to the sustainability of UN's work is the lack of implementation. While many laws and policies are developed and put in place with the support of the UN– and some of them of very good quality – not everything gets fully implemented. Implementation necessitates actions plans that spell out specific actions to be undertaken to ensure implementation. Implementation also requires funds to carry out the required activities. Actions have to be linked to specific budget allocations from the public budget. Thus, policy making needs to be linked to the public financial management system. To address this challenge more effectively, the UN should take a more systematic approach to policy-making by paying particular attention to the issue of implementation.

Another challenge identified by this evaluation is the lack of a well-organized system of documentation and communication/dissemination of information to stakeholders within the UN system. Basic information, including minutes/protocols from key meetings at the regional or country/sub-regional level, was not available or not easily recoverable. The UN should establish an electronic system (linked to UN-Info or somewhere else) that enables staff members to easily store and access information. Also, the UN should promote a culture of documentation, whereby all major meetings and processes are recorded with the aim of strengthening institutional memory in a situation where there is high turnover of key positions.

Based on the evidence and analysis presented throughout this report, this evaluation provides the following recommendations for the consideration of the UN agencies and their counterparts (governmental and non-governmental).

## **RECOMMENDATION 1**

### ***Design of New MSDF***

A number of recommendations derived from this evaluation are related to the design of the upcoming UN programme framework and the monitoring of progress through the effective use of data and evidence.

1. In case there will be quick progress with the adoption of a regional SDG framework, the UN should ground the upcoming programme results framework in the regional SDG framework.

2. To make the RRF more practical and user-friendly, in the upcoming framework the number of indicators should be reduced and the focus should be on those that are most meaningful and more directly related to the work of the UN. Also, care should be undertaken to have a results framework that is underpinned by a stronger logic of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also by other relevant demographics (given the significant focus of the programme of specific social groups).
3. In the process of developing the new cooperation framework, the stakeholders could consider the development of a Theory of Change that connects the different pieces of work that the agencies carry out into a unified and cohesive framework. A UN-level theory of change could help the agencies to identify in clearer terms opportunities for collaboration, mechanisms of cooperation, and channels through which expected change will take place at the level of policies, institutions, communities and individuals.
4. The UN should also establish a more comprehensive monitoring system at the regional level, under the coordination of the RCOs. The monitoring system should encompass not only results, but also performance indicators such as the ones discussed in this report. This should include monitoring mechanisms to track overall expenditure, progress with the piloting process over time, status of adoption and implementation of policy instruments, awareness-raising and information campaigns, etc. The agencies should cooperate by providing the necessary information to the respective RCOs and assisting with the analysis.
5. The UN should also evaluate the results and impact of its work more frequently and in a more cohesive way – for example, through joint outcome evaluations focused on one sector or cross-agency programme or even evaluations like this one which encompass the totality of UN interventions.
6. Going forward, UN activities should also strengthen its work in support of data collection, analysis and use by partners at the national and sub-national levels and fostering a culture of evidence use in policy-making. The UN should work with national partners to strengthen the demand for data and its use in strengthening accountability in the public sector. Such focus will not only ensure better targeting of interventions to the most vulnerable and better monitoring of the results of UN's work, but will also contribute to improving the country's situation on data availability and analysis.
7. It will be important that the new programme document define with greater clarity some of the concepts and provide sufficient practical guidance for their implementation.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

### ***Results-based Management***

1. The UN system should strengthen its data infrastructure, including the coordination and data aggregation mechanisms across the region, the structure and operability of the UN-Info system, the definition of indicators, baselines, targets, etc. Significant training will be required for this, which ideally should be conducted jointly for the agencies and organized/coordinated by the respective RCOs.
2. There is also need for greater support by the UN for data collection and analysis capabilities in the region. The focus on this support should be not only on the technical capacities of the data-related agencies, but also on the effective coordination of those responsible for the production of data and those responsible for the analysis and dissemination of statistics. Harmonization of data across national boundaries should be an important objective driving the work of the UN

and its partners. Also, attention should be paid to the issue of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also other dimensions that are crucial to effective policymaking. Progress in this area will depend on the political will of governments to implement the legal changes that will lay the foundations for a proper functioning of national statistical systems and on the efforts of regional bodies and national statistical offices. The UN should encourage this process through its advocacy and norm-setting activities.

3. Given that CARICOM has a particular interest in the development of statistical capabilities in the region, and has even come up with a strategy for this objective, it will be important for the UN system to coordinate efforts with the CARICOM Secretariat on this matter so that all efforts by the two systems are complementary and synergetic. This work should also be closely coordinated with UNDESA and UNECLAC, UN organizations that have been particularly involved in the development of national SDGs in the respective countries/territories.
4. All UN's statistics-related activities and support should take place in the context of a data ecosystem at the regional level grounded on a master plan for statistical development. This is an approach that the UN is well-positioned to promote with the respective governments. Given the weakness of statistical capabilities in the region, this is something that the UN could consider for the upcoming MSDF. The UN has also an opportunity to support the development of a mechanism that strengthens coordination between the regional data ecosystem and established international statistical systems.
5. As a first step, the UN system should strengthen its own coordination structures around the SDGs. A system should be put in place that will enable the UN in the region to keep track of the situation and activities related to the SDGs. This system should be underpinned by a permanent SDG group that meets regularly to review the situation and share information. SDG-related support by the agencies should be coordinated more effectively.
6. RMETT's active role in coordinating M&E activities under the MSDF should be maintained and further strengthened in the new programme cycle. This group should be firmly institutionalized and supported with training and other resources. An effective M&E system should also be accompanied by a costed M&E work plan grounded in the results framework of the new MSDF. This plan should be supported with the necessary financial resources. RMETT should be responsible for actions under this plan, including periodic assessments.
7. The UN system should work more closely with CARICOM in supporting the establishment of an effective system for monitoring progress on SDGs at the regional level (including the development of an SDG database). The UN system, in partnership with CARICOM, can address the need for institutional and technical capacity to produce the necessary statistics to establish and monitor the SDGs. This could include a regional SDG target setting workshop with regional agencies which will provide a common target setting methodology and will foster greater data and M&E synergies with their strategic plans. Further, the establishment of the online M&E portal for SDG reporting at the regional level could be an initiative that the UN and CARICOM could support jointly.
8. UNCTs at the country/sub-regional level should coordinate more effectively their support for national partners on SDG-related matters. An assessment of the gaps and opportunities across the region would be a first good step. It might also be useful for the UN to organize a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) mission to identify key sectors for acceleration of SDG implementation in the region and in individual countries/territories. The UN could be instrumental in providing training support for relevant national authorities.
9. The MSDF should be underpinned by a clear plan for evaluations, assessments, randomized control trials, etc., based on prior agreements and discussions led by the RCOs with the involvement of the agencies. Going forward, the agencies should evaluate the results and impact of their work regularly and in a more coherent way, including through joint outcome evaluations targeting an entire sector or even the totality of UN activities, as is the case with



this evaluation. The evaluative work undertaken by the agencies should be utilized more effectively and strategically at the country and regional level by the respective UNCTs.

10. The UN should coordinate the reporting tools and products used by the agencies, a process which should be facilitated more effectively by the respective RCOs.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

#### *Strengthening Inter-agency Cooperation*

With the RCOs now invigorated and with more resources available, there should be a coordinated and concentrated effort between the UN and the respective government to establish strong foundations for a permanent and efficient functioning of these coordination structures.

1. At the regional level, the UN should consider strengthening the effectiveness of the RSC and RCM, and where feasible improving the participation of national partners and the quality of the inputs that are discussed and the outputs resulting from these meetings. The UN needs to establish a procedure for how these bodies accept the input of non-members and how they keep them informed. The VPNs and RTTs will require significant attention the UN leadership in the region. Given the acceleration of digitalization and virtual meetings due to Covid-19, the VPNs should become a much more effective platform for the exchange of information, expertise and knowledge across the region. The right incentives should be created for the engagement of not only UN staff in them, but also government and non-government counterparts.
2. At the country/sub-regional level, the UN should strengthen inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, especially the JNSC and Results Groups, which are crucial not only for coordination among the agencies, but also for coordination with key government counterparts. The following are some potential measures to be considered.
  1. JNSCs and Results Groups should be fully established and institutionalized in all countries. The upcoming MSDF cycle represents a good opportunity to reset the process. The frequency of result group meetings should be clearly determined and maintained throughout the cycle. Results Groups meetings should also become more effectively institutionalized by strengthening the tracking of their decisions and the reporting of their results (including quality meeting minutes).
  2. UN agencies should commit to attending more effectively results group meetings. This is not only part of the “Delivering as One” to which they have committed in principle, but also carries practical benefits for them. The management of agencies should create incentives for staff members to attend these meetings regularly.
  3. UNCTs in each country/territory should identify incentives that will make result groups more attractive to government staff, despite the opportunity cost that they entail for them. These incentives should be established on a country-by-country (territory-by-territory) basis, in line with the specifics of the context.
3. There is also a need to streamline the multitude of inter-agency groups that exist in the different jurisdictions. As a first step, it will be useful for the UN team to conduct a review of all the existing inter-agency coordination bodies to fully map existing structures. Based on such assessment, the UN can then decide how best to rationalize and streamline these groups, as

well as introduce some uniformity in how they function. There might also be opportunities for building regional bridges that link similar groups across countries/territories.

4. With regards to the operations of the agencies' regional offices, the UN should as a first step conduct a systematic assessment and mapping of what these centers do and what geographical areas they cover. Based on this assessment, the UN should identify options for rationalization in the work of these centers and, in particular, potential for stronger synergies and cooperation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

##### ***Planning***

1. The UN should promote a higher level of awareness among agency staff about the UN reform agenda and its implications on the ground, and in that context the relationship between the MSDF and CIPs. This matter will require training which may be organized by the RCOs.
2. The UN should organize better communication among agencies on planning matters. RCOs should keep the flow of information going with regards to planning processes at the country/sub-regional level. The RCOs should track the planning processes of the agencies and have a clear picture of the involved timelines. Based on this tracking, the RCOs should establish a simple and practical planning system (using standard online tools combined with UN-Info) and provide regular updates to the agencies.
3. RCOs should also ensure that the agency planning process is coordinated with the CIP process through regular meetings with the agencies dedicated to the planning process. The RCO could also facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at the sectoral and national level.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

##### ***Joint Implementation***

##### **Joint Programming**

1. In partnership with the Government, UNCT should identify and institutionalize incentives for the agencies to engage in joint programmes, taking into account the agencies' respective mandates and rules and procedures. While it is up to the partners to decide what would work best in the Caribbean context, potential options could be considered from the experience of other countries.

## Communications

2. As a first step, the UN should develop a joint Communications Strategy at the regional level. The development of joint communications strategies should be replicated at the country/sub-regional level under the coordination of the respective RCOs. The regional RTT should become fully functional and meet regularly to coordinate practical communications aspects across the region. UNIC should ramp up its profile and serve as dynamic center for the spread of information and promotion of advocacy on key issues that fall within its mandate. There are also many opportunities for joint advocacy and awareness-raising activities by UN agencies under the coordination of UNRCOs targeting the awareness of partners and citizens of the SDGs. Ultimately, the objective in this area should be for the UN agencies in the region to deliver to external audiences stronger one-voice messages on key issues.

## Gender Mainstreaming

3. Due to its cross-cutting and normative nature, the UN system should cooperate more effectively at the regional around gender mainstreaming, not only with regards to advocacy and awareness-raising, but also by supporting jointly the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation (i.e. gender-based violence), implementation of international commitments, economic empowerment and political participation of women, and a range of other topics like these. The UN system should aggregate agency efforts across territorial boundaries into a joint gender advocacy and communication strategy and work plan at the regional level adapted to the MSDF context. The agencies should also strengthen joint external communications on gender to ensure consistent messages and information and promote gender equality in external communications.

## Research and Analytical Products

4. Under the coordination of the RCOs, the UN system should establish processes and mechanisms for the coordination of these activities. At a minimum, the agencies should establish a system for sharing amongst themselves information on planned analytical exercises which will be of interest to other agencies. The regional coordination mechanisms could include a standardized tool for tracking this type of work. The RCOs should play a more active role in disseminating this information among the agencies across the region and in facilitating joint activities.

## Trainings

5. The UN should identify synergies in training activities, starting with joint assessments of training needs, joint delivery of training programmes, exchange of training content across agencies and countries/territories, etc. There are areas, like human rights-based approaches, results-based management, gender mainstreaming, environmental sustainability, etc., involving the same training principles, which makes standardized delivery across organizational or geographical boundaries effortless. Information about training plans by the various agencies should be collected at the regional level and disseminated with all the agencies through the coordination channels. RCOs should play a major role in coordinating this process and facilitating joint training programmes and capacity development activities, starting with their own.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

### *Resource Mobilization*

1. The UN should develop a cohesive Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy at the regional level. Country/territory-level resource mobilization strategies should be sub-sets of this umbrella strategy.
2. RCOs already have more capacity in the area of development finance. They should deploy these capabilities – including the position of the economist – more effectively towards a well-coordinated resource mobilization effort at the regional and country/territory level, using the resource mobilization strategies mentioned above as the roadmaps for the process.
3. The UN should aim to tap into mechanisms available for large financing, including the vertical funds and green funds related to climate change, such as the Green Climate Fund. This as well will require a well-thought-out and strategic approach and all priorities and actions should be embedded in resource mobilization plan.
4. UN should enhance cooperation with CARICOM, jointly aiming for increased usage of regionally available resources.
5. The UN should also explore in a systematic and well-coordinated fashion opportunities for government co-financing and partnerships with IFIs. This effort should be coordinated by the RCOs and embedded in the resource mobilization plan.
6. The UN should also explore more systematically partnerships with the private sector. Different models and incentives that have worked elsewhere could be explored for this.
7. The UN system at a fundamental level should be able to report in full accountability on the amount of money it has mobilized and spent in the region as a whole. This will require a solid data entry and quality assurance process for the financial information that is captured in the UN-Info system. RCOs should monitor this process on a continuous basis and provide the necessary training to the UN agencies based on the challenges they identify in a practical manner.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

### *Engagement of Civil Society and Private Sector*

1. The UN should engage civil society more effectively. Engagement should start at the planning stage, including the preparation of the MSDF. Furthermore, the engagement of civil society could be done in a more structured way, involving greater coordination among agencies. The fora for the engagement of national stakeholders should be opened to civil society representatives. CSOs should be involved more actively in the monitoring of results. Reporting at the regional and country/sub-regional level should include civil society. The UN should also explore greater opportunities for community-based interventions and service delivery through CSOs. Lastly, it will important to have a more coherent approach at the UN level (across agencies and countries/territories) for how support to civil society, especially capacity building assistance, is designed and delivered.
2. The UN should step up its engagement with the private sector to ensure that private sector resources are deployed more effectively towards the solution of development problems. There is also potential for the agencies to tap into private financing through partnerships with private companies. The UN should take a more systematic and strategic approach at the regional and country/sub-regional level to engaging with the private sector.

## RECOMMENDATION 8

### *Knowledge Management, Record Keeping and Culture of Documentation*

1. The UN system should be a lot more effective in how it manages the available expertise and knowledge, especially in a regional setting like this one. This evaluation recommends the establishment of a regional platform that enables the UN system to be more efficient in locating, generating, transmitting, and delivering the knowledge and expertise required to meet the development needs of national partners. The UN should establish a seamless infrastructure at the regional level that allows for information, knowledge, expertise, etc., to flow more freely within and between UNCTs. This will require investments in both the institutional infrastructure, as well as ICT infrastructure. The establishment of this infrastructure should be embedded in a broader strategy aimed at improving UN's position in the region as a knowledge organization.
2. The UN should pursue a systematic approach for how information is recorded, stored, managed and retrieved. The UN should establish an electronic system (linked to UN-Info or somewhere else) that enabled staff members to easily store and access information. Also, the UN should promote a culture of documentation, whereby all major meetings and processes are recorded with the aim of strengthening institutional memory in a situation where there is high turnover of key positions.

## RECOMMENDATION 9

### *Scaling-up and Policy Implementation*

1. The UN should track the performance of pilots over time – the lessons they generate during the piloting stage and the extent to which they get replicated and scaled up. As part of the monitoring system, the UN should track pilot initiatives over time and after a pilot's lifetime. The UN should document more effectively results, lessons, experiences, and good practices and share them more widely. RCOs should coordinate more closely the approaches taken by the agencies on piloting. They should also play a more active role in the tracking of these pilot initiatives across agencies over time.
2. The UN should take a more systematic approach to policy-making by paying particular attention to the issue implementation. Policy development should be clearly linked to public budgets. The UN should also strengthen the systems that track implementation results, rather than inputs/outputs and assess more rigorously the sustainability of achievements. The UN should support the implementation capabilities of the governments and not act as a substitute for governments' shortcomings in implementation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations decided in 2020 to conduct an evaluation of the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) 2017-2021, which is the cooperation framework between the United Nations and 18 English and Dutch speaking Caribbean countries and territories. The list of countries and territories that have signed the MSDF is presented in Table 1 below. The MSDF reflects the high-level results of an effective cooperation between the UN System and the governments covered by this strategic framework, during the programming period.

Table 1: Countries and Territories Covered by the MSDF

Countries		Territories	
1.	Antigua and Barbuda	13.	Anguilla
2.	Barbados	14.	Aruba
3.	Belize	15.	British Virgin Islands
4.	Dominica	16.	Curacao
5.	Grenada	17.	Montserrat
6.	Guyana	18.	Sint Maarten
7.	Jamaica		
8.	Saint Lucia		
9.	Saint Kitts and Nevis		
10.	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		
11.	Suriname		
12.	Trinidad and Tobago		

The purpose of the MSDF evaluation was to:

1. assess the performance of the UN system against the MSDF framework;
2. gather key findings and lessons learned to inform the next MSDF planning cycle;
3. improve UN coordination in the Caribbean; and
4. support greater accountability towards agreed national objectives and priorities in the countries.

The evaluation presented in this report serves as an accountability instrument for gauging the UN Development System's collective contribution to the 18 countries and territories. The focus of the evaluation is on the activities, achievements and results of all the resident and non-resident UN agencies in the period 2017-2020. The report examines whether the respective UN Country Teams (UNCTs) have prioritized support and contributed to the development of the respective countries and territories. It assesses the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) in addressing the political challenges faced by the UNCTs, as well as the UNCTs' support for collective objectives on programming and resource mobilization. The evaluation also identifies synergies, gaps, overlaps and missed opportunities. It assesses whether the UNCTs have contributed to transformative change that goes beyond the scope of programmes and projects to facilitate progress towards the achievement of SDGs. The evaluation advises on the overall strategic positioning of the UN Development System, as well as

priorities and considerations for future support. As the UN System in the Caribbean starts preparing for a new cycle, the evaluation serves to inform the approach moving forward and ensure it is evidence-based.

The evaluation was conducted by an international evaluator and a research assistant, working closely with the UNCTs in the region. The process was based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) criteria and definitions and followed norms and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group. The methodology was based on mixed methods and involved the use of commonly applied evaluation tools such as documentary review, interviews, surveys, information triangulation, analysis and synthesis. A participatory approach was taken for the collection of data, formulation of recommendations and identification of lessons learned. A detailed description of the methodology used for this evaluation is provided in Annex I of this report.

Although all possible efforts were made to minimize potential limitations to the evaluation process, certain challenges were noted with regards to the absence of well-defined the baselines and targets for the MSDF indicators, inability of the evaluator to conduct a field mission in the countries and territories involved and have in-person interviews with key stakeholders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, inability to engage in-depth representatives from 18 countries and territories due to the limited availability of time and resources for this evaluation and the lack of systematically organized and stored information about the work of the UN at the regional level (including progress reports, previous evaluations and assessments, etc.).

The following chapter of this report provides a description of the regional context in which the MSDF has been implemented. The third chapter provides a broad overview of the MSDF, focusing on planned results, coordination mechanisms and stakeholders. The fourth chapter presents the report's main findings and consists of four parts corresponding to the four standard evaluation dimensions: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The fifth chapter summarizes the main conclusions and identifies key "lessons learned" drawn from the experience of the MSDF. The last (sixth) chapter provides a set of recommendations for the consideration of the UN and its partners. Additional information supporting the arguments made throughout the document is provided in annexes attached to this report.



## 2. SITUATION ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

The MSDF region includes Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with populations ranging from 3 million for Jamaica to about 5,000 for Montserrat.<sup>2</sup> All MSDF countries and territories are classified under the upper-middle income or high-income category and have achieved significant improvements in human development, reflecting gains in income, education and health. Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, Guyana, Barbados and Belize have the largest economies of the eighteen MSDF countries/territories. Overall, these are narrowly-diversified economies, with an orientation towards tourism and natural resources. The region has become increasingly urbanized, with 72% of the population residing in urban areas.<sup>3</sup> The urbanization process has led to a concentration of the population and infrastructure in coastal areas with increasing demand for jobs, housing, public utilities, services, etc. The region boasts diverse and productive coastal and marine habitats with the greatest concentration of biodiversity in the Atlantic Ocean Basin.

An important feature of the region covered by the MSDF is the regional integration process that has been going on since 1973 underpinned by the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) – see description in the box below. Another integration process in the region has taken place under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which is an inter-governmental organization that promotes cooperation and integration between countries and territories in the Eastern Caribbean in the areas of human rights and good governance.

### Box 1: Overview of CARICOM<sup>4</sup>

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) consists of 15 full member states and 5 associate members with a total population of about 19 million. The CARICOM was established by the English-speaking parts of the Caribbean to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy, while promoting further regional integration and cooperation.

In its Strategic Plan (2015-2019),<sup>5</sup> CARICOM lays out the following vision: “*A Caribbean Community that is integrated, inclusive and resilient; driven by knowledge, excellence, innovation and productivity; a Community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realize his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and contributes to, and shares in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity; a Community which is a unified and competitive force in the global arena.*”

The Community has full juridical personality, vested by the member states and its scope rests in four main pillars: regional economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security. CARICOM shares the following key objectives:

1. to improve standards of living and work;

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1 This section of the report uses text and information from various documents related to UN activities covered by the evaluation.

2 Population figures obtained in March 2021 from <https://www.worldometers.info/>.

3 MSDF document.

4 From the CARICOM website ([www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org)).

5 A new strategic plan is under development by the CARICOM Secretariat.

2. the full employment of labour and other factors of production;
3. accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence;
4. expansion of trade and economic relations with third states;
5. enhanced levels of international competitiveness;
6. organization for increased production and productivity;
7. achievement of a greater measure of economic leverage;
8. effectiveness of member states in dealing with third states, groups of states and entities of any description;
9. the enhanced coordination of member states' foreign and foreign economic policies and enhanced functional cooperation.

The MSDF was designed to address four categories of development challenges in the region: economic, social, environmental, and governance. The following are the specific challenges identified in the MSDF document which largely underpin MSDF's regional priorities.

1. **Economic** – “brain drain”; lagging economic growth; onerous debt; graduation from access to concessionary development funding, resulting in an unfavourable prognosis for the economic growth of countries in the region; gaps in competitiveness, science and technology, and innovation; lack of economic diversification with specialization in a few products and services, with heavy reliance on tourism and agriculture; vulnerability to economic shocks and fluctuations in world prices for oil and other commodities.
2. **Social** – declining demographics with increasing poverty and inequality; unemployment; social exclusion and inequity; ill-health and unhealthy lifestyles, with gaps in nutrition, food insecurity, and challenges to agricultural sustainability; gender inequality, limitations in women's empowerment, and gender-based violence; and educational systems ill-adapted to technological advances and changing social realities, with high male dropout rates; high rates of adolescent pregnancy, youth unemployment, crime; high prevalence of non-communicable diseases and HIV.
3. **Environmental** – natural disaster risks; limited adaptation to climate change and variability;<sup>6</sup> limited use of renewable energy and conservation; inadequate natural resource management; and gaps in water and sanitation.
4. **Governance** – challenges to human security and safety, including high rates of violent crime; troubling levels of non-criminalized forms of social violence, typically directed at members of vulnerable, historically marginalized groups; gender-based violence, targeting of sexual minorities with violence – often tolerated and at times openly promoted; higher vulnerability to violence of differently-abled and older persons; shocking rates of homicide and

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<sup>6</sup> According to UNEP “the Wider Caribbean Region remains highly vulnerable to climate change and its impact on sea level rise, temperature change, coral bleaching, and water security issues, and ocean acidification. Pollution of hydrocarbons, agrochemical, sewage, heavy metals, solid waste, plastics, litter, persistent organic pollutants (POPs); habitat degradation caused by sargassum influx, coastal development, sedimentation, invasive species, ballast water; and weak governance in terms of legislation, policies and institutions also pose threats to environmental sustainability in the region”.

incarceration; insufficient institutional transparency and accountability; and inadequate data management and monitoring.

An additional challenge for the region is the declining development assistance resulting from the graduation of all countries/territories to the upper-middle- or high-income level. This factor, and its effect on the work of the United Nations, will be discussed in more detail further in this report.

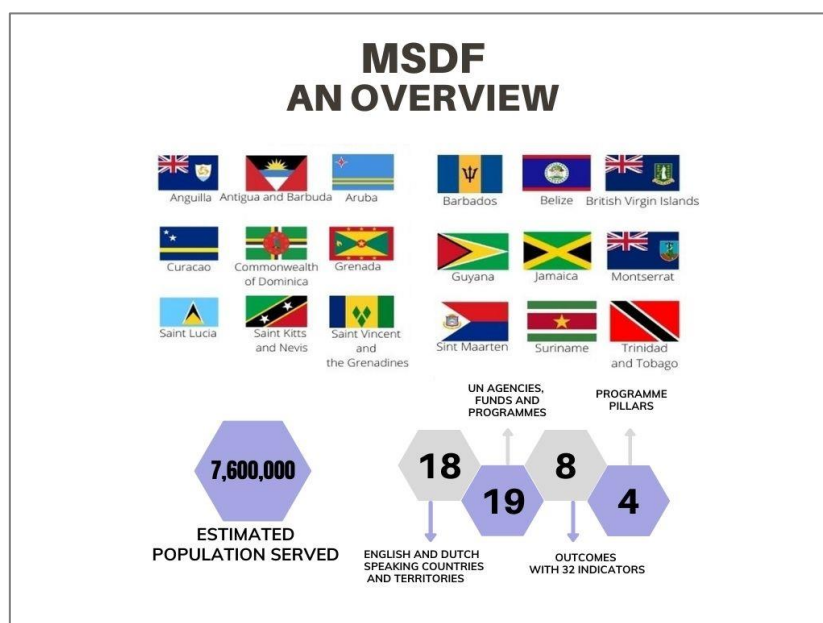
Another daunting challenge for 2020 and 2021 has been the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, compounding what was already a difficult situation, targeting the most vulnerable, hitting hardest on economies and societies with structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The pandemic has diverted scarce resources in response to the pandemic, which has deprived a range of sectors of much needed financial resources. Another effect has been the curtailing of services, with non-essential services cut and people with chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and comorbidities, including older persons, not receiving care in the usual manner. Further, with the drastic reduction in travel and tourism, the region's nations face a daunting pathway to recovery. A key challenge for governments has been to strike a balance between public health measures and economic health measures, in trying to minimize socioeconomic impacts.

### 3. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

This section provides a summary of the activities under the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF). Its objective is to highlight major MSDF activities, describe their objectives, and provide a description of key programme features, such as implementation arrangements and timelines, organizational structure, etc. This overview provides the context on which the report’s successive analysis builds.

As noted in a previous section, the MSDF is the cooperation framework between the UN and 18 English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries and territories for the period 2017-2021. Through an integrated regional approach, the MSDF builds on foundations previously laid by a set of individual United Nations Development Frameworks (UNDAFs) for Barbados and the OECS, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The MSDF lays out the plan for how the UN agencies, funds, and programmes (hereinafter referred to as agencies) were expected at the beginning of the programme cycle to pool their resources and assets, based on their comparative advantages, within a single strategic framework, aligned with and supporting the overarching strategic goals of the Caribbean’s governments and stakeholders. The MSDF identifies key development bottlenecks in the region related to interconnected dimensions – economic, social, and environmental – that were seen as critical constraints for sustainable development and democratic governance. It was conceived to provide a platform for participating countries to access UN’s global expertise and experience at both the country and sub-regional levels.

Figure 1: Overview of MSDF



The MSDF reflects the high-level results that were expected to be pursued by the UN System and the governments covered by the framework. The MSDF’s four main outcomes areas are:

1. An Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean
2. A Safe, Cohesive, and Just Caribbean
3. A Healthy Caribbean
4. A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean

For each priority area, an umbrella “outcome statement” was formulated to express the vision that the UN system was expected to pursue through its combined efforts with national partners. Under each outcome area, the UNCT identified a set of outputs, targets and indicators that represent the practical achievements that were aimed by the UN in the region. The outcome statements are shown in the box below, whereas the indicators and targets are presented in the results framework attached in Annex VIII of this report.

**Box 2: MSDF’s Expected Results**

The following are the four key results (outcomes) expected from the MSDF.<sup>7</sup>

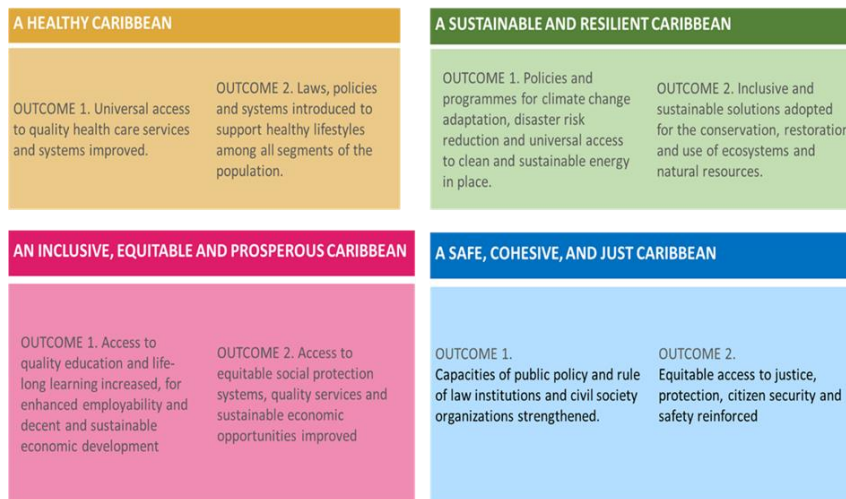
1. **Outcome 1:** This priority area focuses on issues of access to quality education; promoting competitive and sustainable industrialization activities; supporting SMEs in enhancing manufacturing value-added and their insertion into the regional and global value chain; and improving social protection, through the promotion of decent work opportunities, entrepreneurship, and enhanced social protection programmes. These dimensions are reflected in the outcomes “Access to quality education and life-long learning increased, for enhanced employability and sustainable economic development” and “Access to equitable social protection systems, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities improved”.
2. **Outcome 2:** This priority area focuses on issues of health and well-being, nutrition and food security, and water and sanitation, and the two dimensions reflected in the outcomes are “Universal access to quality health care services and systems, and Laws, policies, and systems introduced to support healthy lifestyles among all segments of the population”. The outcomes are examined through a multi-sectoral approach that builds on a health-in-all-policies approach.
3. **Outcome 3:** This priority area acknowledges that challenges with citizen security are increasingly restricting Caribbean people’s ability to live full and productive lives and is focused equally on violence in the home and in the community. It will therefore seek to address the challenges relating to crime, violence, and insecurity by supporting the creation of conditions for a cohesive, safe, and just Caribbean, while tackling the root causes that promote and perpetuate violence and insecurity. These dimensions are reflected in the outcomes: Capacities of public policy and rule-of-law institutions and civil society organizations strengthened and Equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety reinforced.
4. **Outcome 4:** This priority area focuses on the effects of climate change on livelihoods, especially those who are most vulnerable. It focuses on strengthening institutional and community resilience, natural resources management, protection and sustainable use of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, renewable energy, and inclusive and sustainable societies. Finally, it demands an integrated approach to the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Each of these priority areas contains two broad outcomes aligned to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the regional level, the MSDF was intended to promote accountability through the regional outcomes that are directly linked to one or several SDGs, towards which they are contributing. Furthermore, the core principles of human rights, gender equality, youth, environmental sustainability, and development of national capacity are mainstreamed across the four priority areas of the MSDF framework. The figure below shows a simplified schematic representation of the four MSDF outcomes.

Figure 2: MSDF Outcome Areas

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<sup>7</sup> The formulation of the outcomes presented in the table is taken from the UNPSD document.



A peculiar feature of the MSDF is its regional nature (multi-country framework). The very idea of the MSDF was motivated by the belief that similar development challenges of the Caribbean countries require a coherent and coordinated response by the UN. Consequently, the MSDF was designed to allow for a sharper focus on common regional priorities, enhance regional initiatives and collaboration, and enable knowledge sharing and cross-collaboration within the region. It should also be noted that this region includes three of the eight UN Multi-Country Offices (MCOs) currently existing in the world. MCOs are comprised of resident and non-resident UN agencies, funds and programmes providing development services to multiple countries under the leadership of one Resident Coordinator. As can be seen from Table 3 below, the three MCOs under the MSDF are the Barbados and OECS RCO (serving 10 countries/territories), the Jamaica RCO (serving 5 countries/territories) and the Trinidad and Tobago RCO (serving 4 countries/territories).

For all the strengths of such a regional (and MCO) approach, it also introduces complexity in how the work of the UN system is structured and coordinated across national boundaries. First, the smaller regional programmes (such as those represented by the MCOs) under the larger MSDF framework resemble “Russian dolls” with one framework nested in another, resulting in multiple layers of coordination. Further, the boundaries of the countries/territories covered by a particular UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO)<sup>8</sup> do not fully correspond with the boundaries of the countries/territories under that RCO that have signed the MSDF. Jamaica is a case in point where Bahamas, Bermuda, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos also fall under the purview of the RCO together with Jamaica but are not party to the MSDF. The table below provides the list of countries/territories covered by each RCO, as well as the list of those that are party to the MSDF. Furthermore, given the relatively small size of the Caribbean countries and the corresponding UN programmes, the functions of UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) are sometimes shared between two RCOs. In the MSDF region, this is the case with Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname which share one RC and Belize and El Salvador which share another RC (in this case, El Salvador is not even party to the MSDF and is a Spanish-speaking country). Also, agency mandates and programmes are organized in a complex array of patterns. Some entities have responsibilities for one country, some have mandates that overlap with those of the RCOs, whereas others are responsible for the whole Caribbean. For example, FAO Jamaica covers Jamaica, Bahamas and Belize, whereas UNESCO Eastern Caribbean covers not only the Eastern Caribbean, but also Turks and Caicos Islands.

Table 2: UNRC and MSDF Signatories

<sup>8</sup> The RCOs are structures of the UNCT that were delinked from the UNDP on 1 January 2019.

UNRCO	Countries/Territories Covered by the RCO	MSDF Signatories
<i>Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean</i>	1. Anguilla	11. Anguilla
	2. Antigua and Barbuda	12. Antigua and Barbuda
	3. Barbados	13. Barbados
	4. British Virgin Islands	14. British Virgin Islands
	5. Dominica	15. Dominica
	6. Grenada	16. Grenada
	7. Montserrat	17. Montserrat
	8. Saint Kitts and Nevis	18. Saint Kitts and Nevis
	9. Saint Lucia	19. Saint Lucia
	10. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	20. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
<i>Belize</i>	1. Belize	2. Belize
<i>Guyana</i>	1. Guyana	2. Guyana
	3. Jamaica	8. Jamaica
<i>Jamaica</i>	4. Bahamas	
	5. Bermuda	
	6. Cayman Islands	
	7. Turks and Caicos	
<i>Suriname</i>	1. Suriname	2. Suriname
	1. Trinidad and Tobago	5. Trinidad and Tobago
<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>	2. Aruba	6. Aruba
	3. Sint Maarten	7. Sint Maarten
	4. Curaçao	8. Curaçao

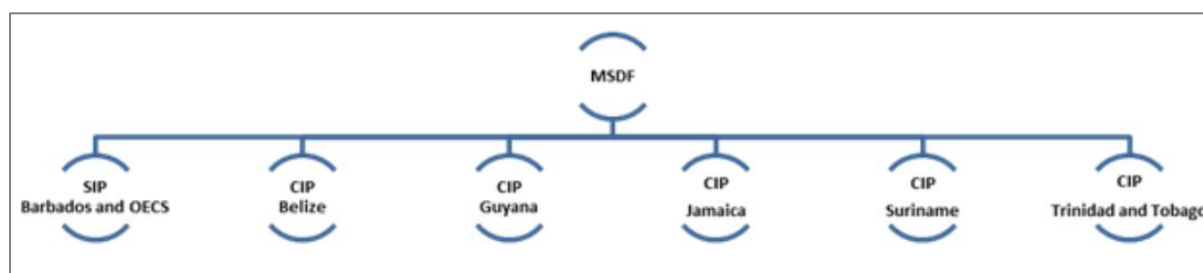
It should also be noted that the MSDF was conceived as a platform for development cooperation between the UN system and CARICOM, as agreed in the biannual UN-CARICOM meetings. It was also expected to further collaboration between the UN and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The MSDF was also expected to contribute to the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (known as SAMOA Pathway).<sup>9</sup>

While regional in nature, the MSDF is implemented primarily by structures which are national/sub-regional. Thus, at the country/territory level, the MSDF is operationalized through the so-called Country (Sub-regional) Implementation Plans (CIPs/SIP). These plans (Joint Work Plans) are conceived to

<sup>9</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/samoapathway.html>

translate MSDF’s regional outcomes into concrete, measurable and time-bound outputs and activities for each country/territory. As can be seen from the figure below, the MSDF includes five CIPs and one SIP for Barbados and the OECS. Barbados and OECS is an MCO which implements programming at the country, sub-regional and regional level. Its programme includes projects such as CARISECURE, JCCCP, etc., which are regionally implemented. All MCOs will transition to CIPs as part of the MCO review recommendations. This process is currently ongoing and draft CIP for the 10 countries under Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean will be completed in 2021.

Figure 3: Implementation Plans under the MSDF



The table below lists the UN agencies operating in the region by country/territory. As can be seen from the table, a total of 21 UN agencies are resident in the region, whereas 29 operate from outside of the region. All the agencies are coordinated by the six RCOs located in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, Guyana, Barbados and Belize.

Table 3: Resident and Non-resident UN Agencies Operating in the Region10

Resident Agencies		Non-resident Agencies	
<b>Barbados and the OECS (sub-region)</b>			
1.	WFP	10.	UNODC
2.	UN Women	11.	UNDRR
3.	UNFPA	12.	UNEP
4.	UNOPS	13.	UNESCO
5.	UNDP	14.	UNAIDS
6.	UNICEF	15.	UNHCR
7.	PAHO/WHO	16.	UN-Habitat
8.	ITU	17.	IOM
9.	FAO	18.	ILO
<b>Belize</b>			
1.	IOM	1.	FAO
2.	PAHO/WHO	2.	IAEA
3.	UNDP	3.	ILO

10 Care should be taken when reviewing this tables as some agencies have activities in a certain country or territory, while being based in another country or territory.



4. UNICEF	4. IFAD
5. UNHCR	5. OHCHR
6. UNFPA	6. UNEP
	7. UNESCO
	8. UNAIDS
	9. UNWOMEN
	10. WFP
	11. UNOPS
<b>Guyana</b>	
12. UNAIDS	1. IFAD
13. UNFPA	2. ILO
14. UNICEF	3. UNODC
15. UNDP	4. UNESCO
16. UNEP (until Dec 2020)	1. UNIC
17. PAHO/WHO	2. UNLIREC
18. IOM	3. UNEP (from Jan 2021)
19. FAO	4. ECLAC
20. UNHCR	5. UN HABITAT
21. UNCTAD	6. UNDRR
22. UN Women	7. IAEA
	8. WFP
<b>Jamaica</b>	
1. FAO	15. UNHCR
2. IOM	16. UNITU
3. ISA	17. UNLIREC
4. OHCHR	18. UN OCHA
5. PAHO/WHO	19. UNODC
6. UNAIDS	20. UNOPS
7. UNDP	21. UN WOMEN
8. UNDSS	22. WFP
9. UNEP – Cartagena Convention Secretariat	
10. UNEP – Caribbean Sub-Regional Office	
11. UNESCO	

12.	UNFPA		
13.	UNICEF		
14.	UNCTAD		
<b>Suriname</b>			
23.	UNDP	1.	UNEP
24.	UNFPA	2.	UN WOMEN
25.	UNICEF	3.	ILO
26.	FAO	4.	IOM
27.	PAHO/WHO	5.	UNAIDS
		6.	UNESCO
		7.	UNHCR
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>			
8.	UNDP	19.	UNEP
9.	UNFPA	20.	WFP
10.	UNICEF		
11.	UNLIREC		
12.	IOM		
13.	UN WOMEN		
14.	ECLAC		
15.	UNHCR		
16.	FAO		
17.	PAHO/WHO		
18.	ILO		

The agencies with operational regional offices in the Caribbean are: FAO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIC, UNOPS, UN Women, and WFP. Also, the following agencies have regional offices that cover Caribbean countries and territories: IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNLIREC, UNODC, UNSDG.

Figure 4: UN Agencies Operating in the MSDF Region



The MSDF document also included a plan for the financial resources that were expected to be mobilized and expended by the UN system in the course of the MSDF cycle. A detailed discussion of the financial resources planned and mobilized under the MSDF is presented in section 4.3. of this report on “efficiency”. The MSDF document also included a results framework which will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.2.1. of this report (Measurement and Tracking of Results).

The MSDF is not underpinned by a *theory of change* that connects the different pieces of work that the agencies carry out into a unified and cohesive framework. This is something that the UN could consider in the upcoming version of the MSDF. A regional-level theory of change would enable the UN to identify in clearer terms opportunities for collaboration, mechanisms of cooperation, and channels through which expected change will take place at the level of policies, institutions, communities and individuals. The excerpt in Box 3 below is guidance provided in UN guidelines for the formulation of the theory of change during the development of the cooperation framework.

**Box 3: Guidance on the Theory of Change in UN Cooperation Framework Document<sup>11</sup>**

The theory of change should be based on the needs of the country (demand) and examined through the lens of the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles, rather than just the immediately available capacities and resources available (supply) of the UN development system and other partners. The theory of change shows where and how development actors need to come together to contribute to the desired change, providing the basis for wider, higher quality and transformational partnerships. Based on a shared understanding of opportunities, risks and bottlenecks, and the inequalities that persist, the UN development system agrees on results that it can contribute to through the UNCTs own resources and through leveraging those of other stakeholders. It also identifies areas of comparative advantage for the UN development system to make its best collective contribution. To leave no one behind, the theory of change must address structural barriers to equality, resources and opportunities, and any discriminatory laws, social norms and stereotypes that perpetuate inequalities and disparities.

It is also important to note that the MSDF process unfolded in the context of the UN reform that saw many changes in how UN coordination is structured and operationalized. The six RCOs were delinked

<sup>11</sup> From Internal Guidance, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 3 June 2019.

from UNDP in 2019 and the transition process involved was characterized by changes in the RCOs' leadership and staff. These changes, while important for the strengthening of the capacities of the offices, also had a disruptive effect, as will be discussed further in this report.

Another important observation that should be pointed out in this overview is that certain concepts mentioned in the MSDF document are not defined with clarity and are outlined in an open-ended way which suggests that at the point of the formulation of the document there was uncertainty on how to proceed with their execution. The following are key examples of these concepts (from page 18 in the document):

1. The establishment of an “*SDG knowledge platform*” was announced in the document, but there were no details on what this platform entailed and how it would be established. Even at the point of this evaluation, it is not clear what this platform could have looked like.
2. The MSDF document also mentioned “*new operating models for cooperation and coordination among the UNS, governments, civil society, and private sector in countries, aimed at reducing bureaucracy and increasing the focus on results*”. These models sound useful, but the description lacks sufficient clarity and guidance for their implementation, as well as evaluation at this point in the programme cycle.
3. The MSDF document also noted the establishment of a “*framework for strategic partnership to increase development cooperation resources*”. This framework too was insufficiently defined and certainly no clear framework that played the described role had materialized at the point of this evaluation.

Going forward, it will be important that the new programme document define with greater clarity some of the concepts and provide sufficient practical guidance for their implementation and monitoring.

## 4. MAIN FINDINGS

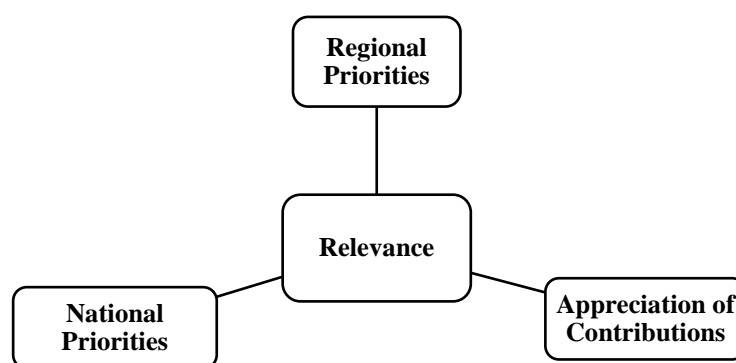
This evaluation's findings are organized in the following four sections: i) relevance (the extent to which the MSDF has been relevant to the region's priorities and needs); ii) effectiveness (whether the MSDF has contributed towards development results for the region); iii) efficiency (whether the delivery of results has been efficient); and, iv) sustainability (the extent to which MSDF benefits are likely to be sustained).

### 4.1. RELEVANCE

When assessing the relevance of the MSDF, it is important to bear in mind the clear distinction between what was envisaged to be achieved on paper (in the MSDF document) and what turned out in reality.<sup>12</sup> The rest of this section examines the relevance of the MSDF in three different ways (as shown in Figure 5 below):

1. Alignment of the priorities identified in the MSDF with the regional priorities defined in regional strategic documents.
2. Alignment of the priorities identified in the MSDF with country/territory priorities identified in national development strategies and plans.
3. Extent to which the actual results and contributions of the UN system are valued by the various stakeholders engaged in the evaluation process.

Figure 5: Assessment of MSDF's Relevance



#### 4.1.1. Alignment with Regional Priorities

The regional priorities underpinning the MSDF are for the most part aligned with CARICOM's Strategic Plan for 2015-2019, although both sets of priorities are framed in very general terms which makes alignment not extremely meaningful.<sup>13</sup> As of the writing of this evaluation report, CARICOM had not released an updated version of its strategic plan, although CARICOM officials interviewed for this evaluation confirmed that a new document was under preparation. Taking CARICOM's Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 as the basis for comparison with MSDF priorities, the plan identified the following high-priority areas for focused implementation:

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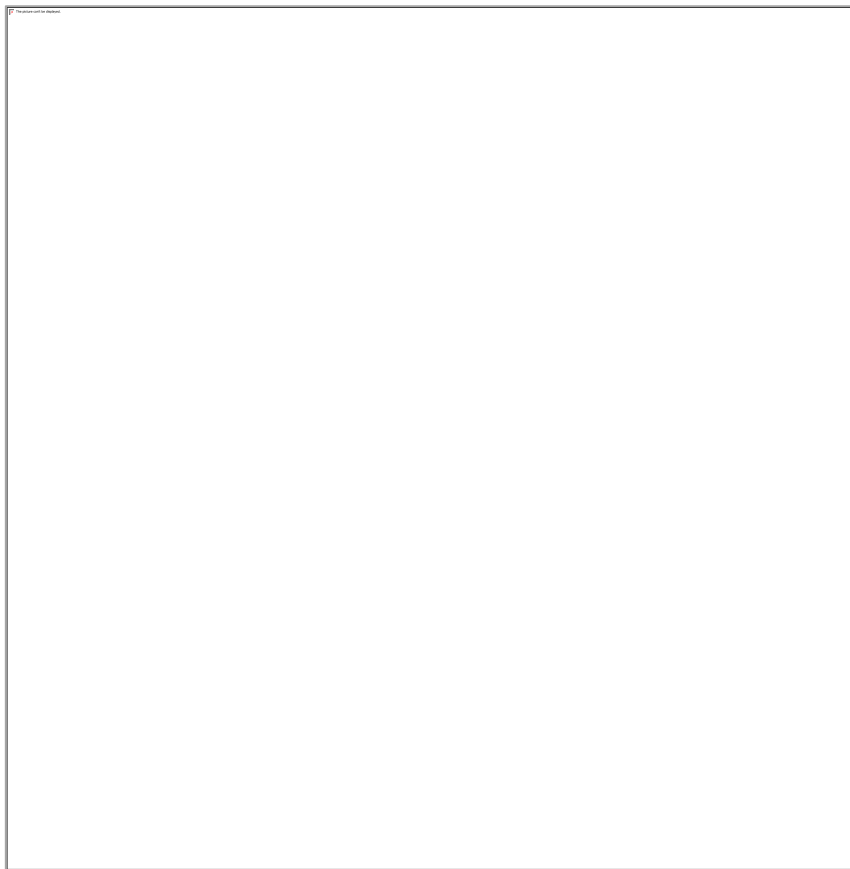
<sup>12</sup> Any difference between what was planned in the MSDF document and what was achieved on the ground could be a result of two factors – (i) what the agencies undertook was not the same or aligned with what was laid out in the MSDF document, sometimes for reasons outside the control of the UN, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; or, (ii) the implementation of the agency programmes did not produce the expected results, as outlined in the MSDF document.

<sup>13</sup> Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015 – 2019: Repositioning CARICOM.

1. Building economic resilience – Stabilization and sustainable economic growth and development.
2. Building social resilience – Equitable human and social development.
3. Building environmental resilience.
4. Building technological resilience.
5. Strengthening the CARICOM identity and spirit of community.
6. Strengthened governance arrangements within CARICOM.

These priorities and their interconnected nature are shown in the figure below taken from CARICOM's strategic plan.

Figure 6: CARICOM's Six Integrated Strategic Priorities<sup>14</sup>



The desired outcomes identified in CARICOM's Strategic Plan are:

1. Strong Economic Growth and Reduction in Poverty and Unemployment;
2. Improved quality of life;
3. Reduced environmental vulnerability;
4. An integrated Community with Equity for All.

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<sup>14</sup> Taken from CARICOM's Strategic Plan 2015-2019.

Albeit broadly framed, MSDF priorities and outcomes correspond to the above-mentioned CARICOM priorities and desired outcomes. In effect, there is no CARICOM priority that is not directly supported by the MSDF and, vice versa, there is no MSDF thematic area that does not correspond to a CARICOM priority. Moreover, CARICOM’s emphasis on resilience fits well with the UN’s and MSDF’s focus on resilient livelihoods and institutions. Furthermore, MSDF’s integrated approach mirrors CARICOM’s efforts for integrated solutions. This alignment is not only a reflection of the broad way in which the priorities of both organizations are framed, but also perhaps a result of the common problems that they have identified in the region.

The MSDF is also aligned with other strategic documents developed by CARICOM in key areas. One such strategy is the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) for the period 2019-2030 which prioritizes the strengthening of the statistical capacities in the region and the monitoring of SDGs. This objective goes hand in hand with the efforts taken by the UN system to improve data collection systems and processes in the region. Another strategic document developed by CARICOM is the Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy, which prioritizes the development of skills and competencies, not only for the economy, but also for personal development and good citizenship. This is another key area in which the UN system in the region has contributed through the MSDF. A third strategic framework of CARICOM that matches well with the activities under the MSDF is the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS. The MSDF also fits well with a range of strategic documents developed by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). All the strategic documents under CARICOM and OECS identified in the course of this evaluation are shown in the table below.





The MSDF is also aligned with the 2019-2028 OECS Development Strategy which mirrors the key pillars/outcomes of CARICOM.

Table 4: CARICOM and OECS Strategic Frameworks

<b>Regional Body</b>	<b>Title of Strategy</b>	<b>Period Covered by the Strategy</b>
CARICOM	<a href="#">Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015 – 2019: Repositioning CARICOM</a>	Medium Term 2015-2019
CARICOM	<a href="#">CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) – 2019 – 2030</a>	Long Term 2019-2030
CARICOM	<a href="#">Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS 2019 – 2025</a>	Medium Term 2019-2025
CARICOM	<a href="#">Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy</a>	
CARICOM	<a href="#">CARICOM Human Resource Development Strategy 2030</a>	Long term 2018-2030
OECS	<a href="#">OECS Development Strategy</a>	Medium Term 2019-2028
OECS	<a href="#">OECS Education Sector Strategy</a>	Medium Term 2012-2021
OECS	<a href="#">OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics</a>	Long Term 2017-2030
OECS (and World Bank)	<a href="#">OECS Countries - Regional partnership strategy for the period FY15-19</a>	Medium Term 2015-2019
OECS (and World Bank)	<a href="#">OECS Regional Health Project</a>	Medium term 2019-2024

Table 515 below maps the MSDFs outcomes by the SDGs and shows that as it was formulated the MSDF captures pretty well all SDGs.

Table 5: Mapping of MSDF Outcomes According to SDGs<sup>16</sup>

MSDF Outcomes	SDGs
An inclusive, equitable & prosperous Caribbean	
A healthy Caribbean	
A safe & just Caribbean	
A sustainable and resilient Caribbean	

The Caribbean region does not have an approved SDG framework with established indicator baselines and targets. The work that has been achieved on SDGs at the regional level is a list of 125 SDG indicators that have been identified by the Regional Statistics Programme under the CARICOM Secretariat in 2018.<sup>17</sup> A quick examination of these indicators revealed that most of the MSDF activities, as well as the MSDF results framework, are to a large extent aligned with the CARICOM indicators. However, as will be discussed further, both the MSDF results framework and the CARICOM list of SDG indicators lack baselines and targets, so it is not possible to say to what extent the actual targets in the MSDF and the regional SDG framework are aligned with each other.

#### 4.1.2. Alignment with National Priorities

Given its regional nature – especially, in a region with significant diversity – the MSDF faces a daunting task – alignment not only with common goals at the regional level, but also alignment with national goals, so as to foster national development and at the same time deepen cooperation across borders. Certainly, the CARICOM strategic plan mentioned above reflects national priorities. Nevertheless, it is useful to see how the MSDF fits with the policy priorities identified by the constituent countries and territories.

While a detailed assessment of the alignment of the MSDF with national priorities falls far beyond the scope of this document, a quick search and review of national strategies frameworks from the region was conducted in the course of this evaluation to see how the MSDF goals fit with them. The table below shows strategic policy frameworks (development plans, growth strategies, etc.) that have been developed by the countries and territories in the region.

<sup>15</sup> The table is taken from the draft CMCA report developed in parallel with this evaluation report.

<sup>16</sup> SDG 17 on partnerships is cross-cutting across all MSDF outcomes.

<sup>17</sup> CARICOM Core Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Assessment of Data Availability in Member States and Associate Members. Regional Statistics Programme, CARICOM Secretariat, 2018.



Table 6: National Development Frameworks

Country/Territory	Title of Development Plan	Period Covered by the Plan
Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean	<a href="#">Barbados Growth and Development Strategy 2013-2020</a>	Medium Term 2013-2020
Belize	<a href="#">Horizon 2030 - National Development Framework for Development of Belize</a>	Long Term 2010-2030 Medium Term 2009-2020 (to be updated in 2021)
Guyana	<a href="#">Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040 of Guyana</a> <a href="#">Low Carbon Development Strategy (to be updated in 2021)</a>	Long Term 2020-2040
Jamaica	<a href="#">Vision 2030 Jamaica - National Development Plan (NDP)</a>	Long Term 2006-2030
Suriname	<a href="#">Policy Development Plan 2017-2021 Suriname</a>	Medium Term 2017-2021
Trinidad and Tobago	<a href="#">Vision 2030: National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago</a>	Long Term 2016-2030
Antigua and Barbuda	<a href="#">Medium-Term Development Strategy</a>	Medium Term 2016-2020
British Virgin Islands	<a href="#">Medium-Term Development Strategy/ Recovery and Development Plan (RDP)</a>	
Dominica	<a href="#">National Resilience Development Strategy 2030 of Dominica</a>	Long Term 2017-2030
Grenada	<a href="#">National Sustainable Development Plan 2020-2035 Grenada</a>	Long Term 2020-2035
Saint Lucia	<a href="#">Medium Term Development Strategy 2020 - 2023 of Saint Lucia</a>	Medium Term 2020-2023
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	<a href="#">National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025 of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</a>	Long Term 2013-2025

A quick review of these documents revealed that the MSDF, in the broad way it was formulated, is largely supportive of these national efforts and ambitions and is responsive to these countries'/territories' actual needs, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized people. It should be noted, though, that is mostly the result of the broad and high-level fashion in which the MSDF document was formulated. Nevertheless, the MSDF outcomes directly support the achievement of government objectives laid out in these documents. What adds to the relevance of the MSDF is also the fact that the formulation process described in the document has been inclusive and participatory, enabling a range of government and non-governmental stakeholders to become involved.<sup>18</sup> It should also be noted that the MSDF was formulated in a way that enabled the agencies to adapt their programmes flexibly to the rapidly evolving resulting after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (as will be seen in more detail further in this report). Furthermore, several UN agencies have been heavily involved in supporting the region's countries and territories in the development of policy and legislative frameworks (some of which will be highlighted in this report), a process that has contributed to the alignment of the UN contributions to national priorities and objectives.

However, the boundaries between what is regional and what is national should be clearly demarcated in the new MSDF. In the current cycle, UN organizational like ECLAC have encountered challenges

<sup>18</sup> The MSDF document noted that national consultations had an important role in the development of the UN MSDF. Consultations were held in 15 countries using the Common Multi-Country Assessment (CMCA) as the basis for discussions, and provided opportunities for strategic alignment between UN activities and national priorities, as well as a space for countries to validate the CMCA and identify national priorities the UN could address.

with the way the MSDF is structured. The CIP format does not fit ECLAC's nature of operations which is regional – and, actually, extends way beyond the borders of the MSDF region. The lack of a regional implementation plan under the MSDF represents a challenge for organizations like ECLAC because they cannot fit what it does under individual CIPs. In the new version, the MSDF should have clearly delineated national and regional dimensions which are seamlessly integrated with each other (the role of CIPs will be discussed in more detail further in this report).

#### 4.1.3. Value of UN Contributions

While on paper the MSDF document is quite relevant to regional and national priorities, as outlined in the previous two sections, in terms of implementation the situation is more nuanced. There are two important observations to highlight in this regard – first, not all UN agencies perceive their programmes as aligned with the MSDF; and second, the opinions of national stakeholders on how relevant the actual activities of UN agencies under the MSDF framework have been for the region and countries/territories were mixed, with some of them indicating that the interventions are too small and fragmented to ensure significant impact on the key challenges that the region faces.

For the MSDF to be relevant, it is necessary that the programmes of the various UN agencies are derived from it and aligned with it. This is an important question that was examined in the course of this evaluation. When asked about the extent to which their programmes in the region were aligned with the MSDF, some agencies replied that their programmes reflected the MSDF. There were, however, a number of agencies that responded that their programmes were not aligned with the MSDF but were rather planned independently. Certain agencies further responded that their programmes were more aligned with the respective CIP than the regional MSDF, perceiving a misalignment of the CIP with the MSDF. Beyond structural issues related to how the CIPs are constructed in relation to the MSDF, the responses the agencies provided on this matter indicated a lack of awareness about how programming under the MSDF is supposed to take place and how the agencies relate to the MSDF process. The latter indicates the need for not only more information to UN agency staff on this matter, but also training, including those in management positions, which the respective UNRCOs are quite well-positioned to organize.

With regards to national counterparts, those who provided a positive assessment of the MSDF pointed out the many contributions of the UN agencies in various areas which will be outlined in the “effectiveness” section of this report. National counterparts highlighted the focus of UN's work on vulnerable and disadvantaged people – women, children, youth, migrants, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, people at social risk or with health challenges, etc. Such focus has enabled the MSDF to be largely in line with the “*leave no one behind*” principle espoused by the UN globally. The UN has also benefited from the OHCHR-deployed network of human rights advisers placed under the respective RCOs. The advisers have started to assist with the incorporation of human rights into UN programming and implementation. They are supporting UNCTs and national counterparts in implementing human rights norms and principles, aligning national human rights institutions with international standards and engage with UN human rights mechanisms. They are also helping governments to improve reporting and coordination of the implementation of human rights recommendations. Also, many activities under the MSDF have been underpinned by the principle of environmental sustainability. Focus group participants indicated that the UN agencies have supported governments to address key environmental issues. Also, UN agencies have strategically supported the development of many national policies, programmes, strategies and legislation, which has ensured that their activities have been largely aligned with national policy frameworks.

However, several national counterparts across all countries/territories who participated in the focus group discussions for this evaluation noted that they were not familiar with the MSDF. They noted elevated staff turnover rates in their organizations – especially following political transitions in a

number of countries (this will be discussed further in this report). But it is also indicative of a general lack of awareness among national counterparts about what the MSDF is and how it is supposed to operate. Greater awareness and engagement from the side of government authorities requires a more effective functioning of the joint UN-government coordination structures and greater efforts by the RCOs, which, as will be seen further in this report, in most cases are not working systematically.

Civil society and private sector representatives were more critical on the quality of their engagement with the activities of the UN system. Most of them reported being engaged only sporadically and typically on the basis of specific projects by individual agencies. They noted that the UN has not put in place a stable and cohesive mechanism for the continued engagement of civil society and private sector representatives at the regional level, but also in all countries/territories that fall under the purview of the MSDF. Civil society members also stated that UN agencies should engage them not only in the design of interventions, but also in the implementation of projects. The latter would require greater capacity building support by the UN agencies for civil society organizations, which in the region remain quite weak. Another area where UN agencies can be more active is in creating greater space for the interaction of CSOs with the respective government and the policy making process. The involvement of the private sector will also require greater attention in the upcoming MSDF. The UN in collaboration with government counterparts could find ways to channel the resources and contributions of the private sector more effectively towards development objectives. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Caribbean where most countries have graduated to upper-middle income or high-income status, resulting in a decline of development resources from traditional sources.

Overall, there is an impression among stakeholders that in the upcoming MSDF the UN should be able to find a better balance between the regional and national approaches. Several participants thought that the UN has not been able to articulate the added value at the national level, nor at the regional level. In order to be effective and capitalize on economies of scale, the UN needs to articulate a stronger value added at regional level and be able to translate that effectively into the country-level offer. UN's value proposition to its counterparts and beneficiaries should also be grounded in a more effective reporting of results, ideally linked to regional and country SDG frameworks<sup>19</sup> – a theme that will be explored more deeply further in this report. Throughout this process, the UN should maintain greater openness not only at the formulation stage, but also during implementation, ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders, in particular civil society and the private sector.

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<sup>19</sup> There is no fully-developed SDG framework for the region. Of the countries of the region, only Jamaica has a “nationalized” SDG framework, complete with indicators and targets. The other countries/territories have no SDG frameworks or partial ones embedded in national development strategies (this will be discussed in more detail further in this report). However, this is work in progress and hopefully all regional and national development frameworks will be grounded in SDGs.

## 4.2. EFFECTIVENESS

This section provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the work of the UN system under the MSDF. The first part examines how the UN system has measured and tracked results under the MSDF. The second part provides a broad overview of UN's major contributions in each of the MSDF outcome areas.

### 4.2.1. Measurement and Tracking of Results

Upon approval, the MSDF document included a results framework expected to enable the UN system to measure and track on a regular basis results at the regional level. Furthermore, an evaluation, such as this, was expected to be the opportunity for taking stock at a certain point in time of the achievements of the UN system under the MSDF by examining the commitments that were made under the MSDF and verifying the progress on each of the identified indicators.

Unfortunately, such a systematic assessment of progress based on the MSDF indicators could not be carried out under this evaluation for the simple reason that the results framework was underdeveloped and largely incomplete. What appears to have been the case is that when the MSDF document was endorsed, most of the baselines and targets identified in the results framework were not determined or specified. The intention of the people involved with that process was to specify them at a later stage. Multiple attempts were subsequently made to develop a results framework but there were thwarted by the lack of consistent data across the region. Another challenge was the limited human resources (especially, M&E staff) available at that time for the development of the framework. Furthermore, some of the stakeholders who participated in the development of the MSDF were of the opinion that the transition following the UN reform disrupted the continuity of some of these efforts, and in such a situation baselines and targets in the results framework remained incomplete until the point of this evaluation.

The lack of baselines and targets is not the only challenge the MSDF presents with regards to the measurement of results. There are two additional challenges which are related to (i) the quality of the indicators identified in the results framework and (ii) the availability of data in the respective countries/territories and how they are captured in the UN info system. The following is a brief description of these two challenges.

#### Quality of Indicators

Admittedly, identifying and establishing a whole set of indicators at the regional level to measure and track the activities of the entire UN system is no easy feat because the scope of activities that such a framework would cover will be quite broad. However, such indicator sets exist elsewhere, and regional comparisons are used extensively in contexts such as federations, the European Union, etc. A quick examination of the MSDF's results framework reveals that the indicators identified have a number of shortcomings that limit their usefulness and value. This report is not the right place for a detailed discussion of the quality of each indicator, as it would take too much space and divert the thrust of the report,<sup>20</sup> so the following offers a short discussion of the major challenges identified in relation to the existing indicators.

While some of the indicators in the MSDF results framework are derived from the global SDGs and are meaningful in the information they convey over time, many others are not adequate, especially at the outcome level (they are not SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound). A particular weakness that many of the indicators in this framework display is the way change is

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<sup>20</sup> An assessment of the current RRF could be conducted by the UNCT in the process of developing the new cooperation framework.

framed/assessed. A common feature of these indicators is using the number of countries that have achieved a certain threshold as the basis for the indicator. The following are some examples.

1. *Number of countries where the number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population has decreased (indicating country objectives).*
2. *Number of countries that have a decrease in the number of women and men reporting experiences of physical and sexual violence.*
3. *Number of countries where the ratio of judges and resident magistrates has increased.*
4. *Number of countries where sustainable, resilient and resource- efficient construction and retrofitting has been carried out in at least one Government building.*
5. *Number of countries that are able to implement international conventions and protocols to adequately value and protect marine and coastal ecosystems.*

As can be seen from the examples above, the way these indicators have been framed does not allow us to assess in a meaningful way the progress that has been made. For example, if we take the indicator “*number of countries where the ratio of judges and resident magistrates has increased*” and see that the number of countries that have experienced an increase in the ration has grown by one, is that a significant improvement? Does it even matter by how much that ratio has changed in that country or in the whole region? Counting countries on the basis of an arbitrary threshold, instead of tracking a particular meaningful indicator over time, does not provide a useful picture of what is happening in the region. Another weakness of the results framework is the lack of disaggregation of data by gender and other dimensions. The way many indicators have been framed – taking countries as the unit of measurement – does not allow for any meaningful disaggregation.

In the upcoming MSDF, the focus should be on identifying more meaningful and well-defined indicators more directly connected to the work of the UN system, as well as ensuring that these indicators have the greatest likelihood of being tracked/measured over time. Care should be taken to develop a results framework that is underpinned by a stronger logic of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also by other relevant demographics (given the focus of the MSDF of specific social groups). Also, as has been noted previously in this report, the new MSDF should include a solid Theory of Change that connects the different contributions of the agencies into a unified and cohesive framework. A regional theory of change will enable the agencies to identify more effectively opportunities for collaboration and cooperation.

#### Availability of Data

The lack of baselines and targets and the inadequate quality of the indicators is further compounded by the lack of data on the indicators identified in the MSDF results framework. For all the challenges discussed above, if data on the indicators in questions has been captured on a regular basis, this evaluation would have been able to paint a rough picture of the situation by looking at change in those indicators’ values over the MSDF cycle. However, data for these indicators has for the most part not been collected neither at the country/territory level, nor at the regional level.

The UN-Info system was introduced in the middle of the MSDF cycle but has not been fully functional. Although some training was provided initially on the use of the UN-Info system, it has not been used effectively by the agencies to generate the type of information that would be necessary to track progress with the implementation of the MSDF. Data management and analysis in the respective RCOs have been weak until recently with the recruitment of M&E officers in all offices. A full transition to the UN-Info system will require direct data inputting by the agencies, which will necessitate incentives for

the agencies to use the system alongside their reporting requirements, as well as training for respective agency staff.<sup>21</sup>

Several UN staff members interviewed for this evaluation pointed out structural challenges with regards to how the UN-Info system is designed and how it operates. For example, UN-Info was designed for country specific monitoring and tracking and treated the MSDF as a single country and did not allow for country specific disaggregation of results/resources. This clearly seems to have been a constraining factor for its effective use. However, there is now an expectation among UN staff members that the upcoming update of the system will resolve many of these structural issues. Yet, an even greater challenge not under the direct control of the UN is the overall lack of data and statistics in the region due to weak statistical systems within the respective governments. For certain key indicators, there is simply no data available in the countries/territories. For others, data is not comparable, so it is not possible to aggregate the information at the regional level and conduct cross-country comparisons. In some cases, it was noted that there is a lack of clear institutional responsibility or coordination regarding the collection or analysis of data for a given indicator. There is sometimes duplication, with the same type of data collected both by the state statistical agency and other line ministries. There are also cases of different definitions for the same indicator, leading to confusion, or in worst cases scenarios to reporting of different trends. Further complications arise from the fact that many of the jurisdictions are not independent countries and their political status makes it harder to assess their progress. The overall lack of data represents a challenge for regional-level evaluations like this one, but also for the work of the agencies in their planning, design, and evaluation activities.

The MSDF was expected to improve statistical capabilities in the region by enhancing data management and collaboration across agencies and national partners. Although some agencies have made efforts in improving national capacities,<sup>22</sup> significant gaps remain in this area and the potential for improvement is enormous. The UN is uniquely positioned to support the governments' efforts to strengthen its data collection and analysis within responsible ministries. Going forward, the UN has an opportunity to strengthen its work in support of data collection and analysis activities of respective countries/territories. Quality data can be used not only to ensure better targeting of interventions and monitoring of results of UN's work, but will also contribute to improving the availability and quality of data in the region. Given the gaps in data availability, UN support for the generation of statistics will have a strong positive effect on the policy making process. Some measures that the UN system could take in this regard in the region include:

1. The UN system should first strengthen its own data infrastructure, including the coordination and data aggregation mechanisms across the region, the structure and operability of the UN-Info system, the definition of indicators, baselines, targets, etc. Significant training will be required for this, which ideally should be conducted jointly for the agencies and organized/coordinated by the respective RCOs.
2. There is also need for greater support by the UN for data collection and analysis capabilities in the region in the context of work on governance and public administration reform. The focus on this support should be not only on the technical capacities of the data-related agencies, but also on the effective coordination of those responsible for the production of data and those responsible for the analysis and dissemination of statistics in support of policy analysis and

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<sup>21</sup> There was an early effort as UN Info was being rolled-out to secure funding to allow for the unique MSDF situation to be accommodated in the UN Info system. This did not come to fruition as the roll-out of the system itself was delayed.

<sup>22</sup> UNEP, for example, is undertaking a scoping assessment of regional data flows and gaps to improve regional environmental surveillance to support country reporting on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and SDGs, standardize data collection and reporting protocols, and centralize data storage where possible.

decision making.<sup>23</sup> Harmonization of data across national boundaries should be an important objective driving the work of the UN and its partners. Also, attention should be paid to the issue of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also other dimensions that are crucial to effective policymaking.<sup>24</sup> Progress in this area will depend on the political will of governments to implement the legal and administrative changes that will lay the foundations for a proper functioning of national statistical systems and on the efforts of regional bodies and national statistical offices. The UN should encourage this process through its advocacy and norm-setting activities.

3. Given that CARICOM has a particular interest in the development of statistical capabilities in the region, and has even come up with a strategy for this objective,<sup>25</sup> it will be important for the UN system to coordinate efforts with the CARICOM Secretariat on this matter so that all efforts by the two systems are complementary and synergetic. This work should also be closely coordinated with UNDESA and UNECLAC, UN organizations that have been particularly involved in the development of national SDGs in the respective countries/territories.
4. Ideally, all UN's statistics-related activities and support should take place in the context of a data ecosystem at the regional level grounded on a master plan for statistical development and south-south cooperation whereby jurisdictions with more developed statistical capabilities share their experience with other jurisdictions. This is an approach that the UN is well-positioned to promote with the respective governments. In some countries, such as Turkmenistan, the UN system has played particular attention to this matter and has even elevated statistical development as a specific outcome area in the UNDAF document. Given the weakness of statistical capabilities in the region, this is something that the UN could consider for the upcoming MSDF. The UN has also an opportunity to support the development of a mechanism that strengthens coordination between the regional data ecosystem and established international statistical systems.

#### 4.2.2. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The discussion on data in the previous section leads to the discussion of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes put in place by the UN system to track the implementation of the MSDF and report on achievements made jointly by the agencies. Ideally, the UN's M&E framework for the region would have been grounded in the MSDF's results framework, from which the respective RCOs and agencies would have jointly derived country/sub-regional M&E frameworks grounded in their CIPs/SIP. Then country/sub-regional teams would be able to track progress and report at the country/sub-regional level (as shown in the figure below), and subsequently the whole of the UN would be able to build up its level of analysis and track achievements and report at the regional level based on the MSDF commitments. The reality is that this type of monitoring and reporting has not taken place for a variety of reasons.

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<sup>23</sup> Improvements in National Statistical Systems (NSS) and National Statistical Offices (NSO) include availability of financial resources, technical capacity building, requisite personnel and digital technology to carry out censuses and surveys, to enforce registries of reliable administrative records and to produce adequately disaggregated data regularly and in a timely fashion.

<sup>24</sup> Key disaggregation criteria recommended for the SDGs are: (i) gender; (ii) age; (iii) place of residence; (iv) disability status; (v) socioeconomic status (e.g., consumption/ income quintile); and optionally (vi) ethnicity; and (vii) migrant status. None of these are routinely collected or calculated.

<sup>25</sup> Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) for the period 2019-2030 (<https://caricom.org/wp-content/uploads/RSDS2020.pdf>).

Figure 7: Reporting Arrangements Foreseen in the MSDF



First, the data and MSDF result framework challenges described in the previous section have constituted a significant challenge for the UN in terms of how to monitor and evaluate its programme at the regional level. The availability of reliable data is a prerequisite for an effective M&E system. This challenge has directly affected the quality of the results frameworks used in the CIPs/SIP. As the CIPs/SIP are expected to be derived from and be aligned with the MSDF, it is obvious that country/sub-regional results frameworks suffer from the same data and measurement drawbacks described in the previous section.

With regards to what gets reported by the UN at the regional and country/sub-regional level, the situation is equally challenging. The following is brief summary of how the UN has reported at the regional and country/sub-regional level.

1. At the regional (MSDF) level, there has been only one biennial report for 2017-2018. The report provides a narrative of the main activities of the UN agencies in the region but does not provide an assessment of the results based on the MSDF results framework because of the challenges with that framework described in the previous section.
2. At the country/sub-regional level there is no consistency in reporting, although the MSDF document clearly stipulates the requirement for six annual results reports by each RCO, as shown in Figure 7 above. As Table 7 below shows, some countries have not reported at all in the current programme cycle, whereas others have reported only partially. No country has prepared annual reports in a regular and consistent fashion, as a minimum standard of accountability to external audiences. Furthermore, the quality of reporting at the country/sub-regional level presents the same challenges as reporting at the regional level – the reports reviewed for this evaluation display an absence of solid assessments of results based on predetermined and well-identified indicators, baselines, and targets. Annual reports cannot be considered a valid ‘accountability’ instrument until such time as they mandate the use of formally approved MSDF indicators at the outcome level.

Table 7: Reporting on Country Implementation Plans



Country	Reporting
<b><i>Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean</i></b>	1. Annual Report 2019 under development
	2. Annual Report 2020 drafted and awaiting finalization
<b><i>Belize</i></b>	1. United Nations Results Report for Belize 2017 “Leave No One Behind”
	2. 2019 Annual Report being drafted
<b><i>Guyana</i></b>	1. Annual Report 2017
	2. Annual Report 2018
	3. Annual Report 2019
	4. Annual Report 2020
<b><i>Jamaica</i></b>	5. Currently there is only one annual report for 2017
	6. 2020 Annual Report under development
<b><i>Suriname</i></b>	7. Annual Report 2019 being drafted
	8. Annual Report 2020 being drafted
<b><i>Trinidad and Tobago</i></b>	9. Annual Report 2018
	10. Annual Report 2019
	11. Annual Report 2020

Some of the agencies engaged in this evaluation found the reporting requirements at the regional and country/sub-regional level burdensome. They noted that in addition to MSDF and CIP/SIP reporting, they also have to engage in reporting on their own programme, as well as reporting to respective governments. All this reporting involves different requirements and standards, which imposes a heavy burden on their human resources. This challenge brings to the fore the need for coordination within the UN system at large of reporting tools and products, a process which could be facilitated more effectively by the respective RCOs.

Further, no evaluations or assessments of UN programmes (under the one UN framework) have been conducted prior to this one, neither at the regional (MSDF) level, nor at the country/sub-regional (CIP/SIP) level.<sup>26</sup> This is another area that requires closer coordination. The MSDF should be underpinned by a clear plan for evaluations, assessments, etc., based on prior agreements and discussions led by the RCOs with the involvement of the agencies. At the very least, annual results reports should be sufficiently detailed to serve as valid inputs for intermittent evaluations. Going forward, the agencies should evaluate the results and impact of their work regularly and in a more coherent way, including through joint outcome evaluations targeting an entire sector or even the totality of UN activities, as is the case with this evaluation. The evaluative work undertaken by individual agencies should be utilized more effectively and strategically at the country and regional level by the respective UNCTs.

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<sup>26</sup> Evaluative work has actually occurred in some of these countries prior to the aggregation of their programming into the MSDF. For example, Belize had a final evaluation of their first UNDAF 2007-2011 (extended to 2012) and a second evaluation of the successive UNDAF 2013 – 2016.

Effective coordination of monitoring and reporting of results requires institutional and technical structures and instruments. As has been noted, UN-Info is an instrument with significant potential for improving the monitoring and tracking of UN activities at the regional and country level, but certain improvements are needed not only at the infrastructural level, but also in terms of how it is utilized by the RCOs and UN agencies. As has been mentioned previously, there is a need for better processes on how the information is managed in the system and more effective training on the use of UN-Info, which RCOs are well-positioned to organize and coordinate. Importantly, the absence of a dedicated support function within the Development Coordination Office (DCO) has hindered the smooth operationalization of UN-Info across the Caribbean. There is no dedicated support to data officers to address technical issues, channel recommendations upward, champion solutions to unique challenges in the region and initiate conversations with audiences outside the region regarding tools and platforms and the support required.

Another key institutional structure is the RMETT group. This group has become a well-functioning component of the MSDF which played a key role in the conduct of this evaluation by providing input, support and guidance on a regular basis. Along with the RCO team leaders' group, this is the most active MSDF group at the regional level. RMETT's active role in coordinating M&E activities under the MSDF should be maintained and further strengthened in the new programme cycle. This group should be firmly institutionalized and supported with training and other resources. An effective M&E system also requires a costed M&E work plan grounded in the results framework of the new MSDF. This plan must be supported with the necessary financial resources. RMETT should be responsible for actions under this plan, including periodic assessments.

Another instrument that can be used by the UN to strengthen the monitoring of its activities in the region, as well as development results more broadly, is the SDG process. If the region and its constituent jurisdictions had fully developed SDG frameworks (complete with indicators, baselines and targets), it would be easy for the UN to ground its M&E system in those frameworks. The improvement of SDG frameworks presents the UN and its partners with an opportunity to strengthen statistical and monitoring capacities of the countries and territories involved by expanding data sources and collecting higher-frequency and higher-quality data. The box below provides an overview where the region stands with regards to the establishment of SDG frameworks and infrastructure.

#### Box 4: SDG Infrastructure in the MSDF Region

Currently, the SDG infrastructure in the region remains not fully developed. The following is a brief overview of the situation.

1. ***At the regional level***, there is no SDG framework complete with indicators, baselines and targets. The CARICOM Secretariat has identified a set of 125 core SDG indicators for inclusion in CARICOM's Statistical System (CSS).<sup>27</sup> No formal framework has been adopted at the regional level yet.
2. ***Barbados and the OECS*** has no unified SDG framework. Six of the 10 countries have established SDG coordinating mechanisms.

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<sup>27</sup> Specific attention is given to addressing systematic gaps as it relates to monitoring environmental issues such as climate change, natural and man-made hazards and on green economies and statistics to inform crime prevention strategies and citizen security, inclusive of trafficking of humans, drug trafficking and gender-based and gang-related violence.

3. **Belize** does not have a “nationalized” SDG framework.<sup>28</sup> The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) in the ministry responsible for Sustainable Development has core responsibility for the nationalization of the SDGs. This unit assists with SDG data prioritization, collection, analysis and reporting. The collection and storing of data related to SDG indicators is done in the National Statistical System (currently managed by the Statistical Institute of Belize). An inter-agency reporting committee led by the SDU leads the development of national reports (i.e. VNR), with UNRC sitting on its advisory and drafting committee.
4. **Guyana** has no cohesive SDG framework but rather several fragmented frameworks developed by specific government agencies. A Voluntary National Review (VNR) was prepared by the government with UN support in 2019, and the UN conducted an SDG progress assessment as part of the Common Country Analysis for Guyana in 2020.
5. **Jamaica** has a “nationalized” SDG framework, complete with indicators and targets. The main government counterpart, Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), includes a national office called the “Vision 2030 Secretariat”, an “SDG Secretariat” within PIOJ and a national statistical organization called STATIN responsible for collecting, collating and reporting on the SDG indicators.
6. **Suriname** does not have a nationalized SDG framework and there are no dedicated SDG organizational structures in the country.
7. **Trinidad and Tobago** does not have a “nationalized” SDG framework. The Ministry of Planning and Development, through a dedicated desk within the Technical Cooperation Unit (TCU), coordinates the localization, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. The TCU is being reformulated to include an SDG Unit within the new structure.

Several countries/territories have prepared Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and have submitted them to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. This includes Belize (2017), Jamaica (2018), Guyana and Saint Lucia (2019) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago (2020). Antigua and Barbuda is scheduled to submit a VNR in 2021. Suriname had initially planned a VNR in 2020, for which the United Nations provided capacity strengthening and technical support in 2019. However, due to various factors, including COVID-19 and the change in administration, the submission was delayed.

Further, some countries and territories participate in global mechanisms related to the SDGs. For example, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago participate in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators working on the SDG global indicators framework. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname participate in the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in charge of strengthening capacities to improve SDG indicators. A regional SDG Data Forum was organized by the UN in Jamaica under the MSDF framework.

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<sup>28</sup> The Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS 2016-2020) has a monitoring and evaluation framework that infuses the SDGs at the target and indicator level. This means, that in some cases, medium term baselines and targets have been determined for SDG indicators. However, not all SDG indicators are included in this framework and for most of these indicators data is not readily available in the nationalized framework.

As can be seen from the box above, SDG frameworks and structures in the region remain underdeveloped. Strengthening SDG frameworks will allow the region not only to expedite progress in implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda but also for leveraging international financial resources and mobilizing national budgetary allocations towards sustainable development. Although many UN agencies have had activities directly related to the SDGs, the establishment of sound SDG frameworks at the regional and sub-regional level has not gained adequate momentum. Coordination on the SDGs at the level of regional and national institutions is insufficient. The region and individual countries/territories overall lack solid platforms for tracking SDG-related activities and the achievement of national goals. The MSDF document outlined the development of an innovative online platform through a One UN Caribbean SDGs website, envisioned to become the primary source of information on the UN's joint work in the Caribbean.<sup>29</sup> By the time of this evaluation, limited progress had been made on establishing the website.<sup>30</sup> Overall, the work of the UN system in this area is not well-coordinated and support by the various agencies remains fragmented. One good example in this area come from Trinidad and Tobago where the UN, ECLAC and the Government established an SDG Data Repository. The repository has led to the re-design of national surveys, enabling the compilation of disaggregated data on SDGs indicators.<sup>31</sup>

There are multiple opportunities in the SDG area not only for significant substantive engagement of the UN in support of national structures and mechanisms, but also for greater coordination and collaboration within the UN family in terms of how this SDG-related support is delivered. Improved SDG frameworks (indicators, baselines, targets, etc.) will enable the UN system and national and regional institutions to strengthen statistical capacity in the region, which will go hand-in-hand with strengthening of M&E capacities. Given their cross-sectoral nature, the SDGs can also be a strong mechanism for facilitating closer cooperation among the UN agencies. Further, the mainstreaming of SDGs into national planning and budgeting processes requires stronger coordination among all agencies.

There are ample opportunities for a well-coordinated UN engagement in this area. The following are some basic ideas identified in the course of this evaluation that should be further discussed with the UN system.

1. As a first step, the UN should strengthen its own coordination structures around the SDGs. Existing systems and structures that enable the UN in the region to keep track of the situation and activities related to the SDGs under the MSDF framework should be strengthened – this includes RMETT, UN-Info and other structures. This work could be coordinated by a permanent SDG group that meets regularly to review the situation and share information. SDG-related support to national counterparts by the agencies should be coordinated more effectively.

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<sup>29</sup> The MSDF further stated that “under the domain SDGCaribbean.org, this platform will promote joint programming and knowledge-sharing by giving the audience the opportunity to comment, suggest, ask questions and discuss/debate UN MSDF-related topics. It will provide partners and the general public with background information, news, success stories, publications, and other resources, as well as with data and multi-media material. Finally, it will be a platform for interaction, including through forums and surveys”.

<sup>30</sup> Although a website was established, it remains highly dysfunctional

(<http://www.2030caribbean.org/content/unct/caribbean/en/home/MSDF/overview.html>)

<sup>31</sup> A recent example of this is the National Digital Inclusion Survey which was tweaked to ensure SDG data was produced for the indicators related to ICT and Technology.

2. The UN system should work more closely with CARICOM in supporting the establishment of an effective system for monitoring progress on SDGs at the regional level (including the development of an SDG database). The UN system, in partnership with CARICOM, can address the need for institutional and technical capacity to produce the necessary statistics to establish and monitor the SDGs. The establishment of an online M&E portal for SDG reporting at the regional level that also integrates information from UN-Info (available to external parties) could be an initiative that the UN and CARICOM could support jointly.
3. UNCTs at the country/sub-regional level should coordinate more effectively their support for national partners on SDG-related matters. An assessment of the gaps and opportunities across the region would be a first good step. It might also be useful for the UN to organize a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) mission to identify key sectors for acceleration of SDG implementation in the region and in individual countries/territories. The UN could be instrumental in providing training support for relevant national authorities.<sup>32</sup>
4. There are also many opportunities for joint advocacy and awareness-raising activities by UN agencies under the coordination of UNRCOs, targeting the awareness of partners and citizens of the SDGs.

#### 4.2.3. Main Contributions

Given the challenges related to the MSDF's results framework presented in the previous sections of this report, the evaluation could not include an analysis of the achievement of MSDF objectives and targets. Nevertheless, the UN system has provided a range of contributions in various areas throughout the region. This section will describe in general terms the main contributions of UN agencies mainly at the output level in each area identified in the MSDF document. It should be noted here that the deriving the description of UN contributions here has been challenging due to the limited amount of reporting by the UN as a whole at the regional level. Due to the lack of data and absence of tracking mechanisms, it is impossible for most areas to establish benefits derived from UN contributions and the number of beneficiaries. Some of the narrative provided in this section was constructed based on the annual reporting that was available at the regional level and the input that the agencies provided for this evaluation on their activities in the MSDF countries and territories.

#### **1. An Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean**

This MSDF outcome area is underpinned by two broad objectives:

1. *Access to quality education and life-long learning increased, for enhanced employability and decent and sustainable economic development.*
2. *Access to equitable social protection systems, quality services improved.*

The focus of UN's work in this area has been on establishing a child-friendly education system, reversing teenage pregnancy, integrating adolescent mothers in schools, promoting healthy school feeding, promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age, improving access to fair and equitable social protection, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities.

#### **Increasing Access to Quality Education and Life-long Learning**

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<sup>32</sup> The government in Guyana is already organizing training in basic concepts in M&E to new entrants to the public service. This is a low hanging fruit that other countries can adopt with support from the UN.

In the education sector, UNESCO has been an active player through involvement in a range of initiatives, such as the establishment of the Caribbean Centre for Education, review of the Caribbean countries' Education Management Information System, training of teachers to address the 'ongoing learning crisis gap' through innovative teaching practices and pedagogies, sharing of best practices on vocational education among policymakers and practitioners,<sup>33</sup> identification of gaps in the alignment of national education policies with SDG 4 imperatives and the development of a roadmap for addressing education planning capacity needs and policy gaps, using ICT to increase the knowledge and skills of young people in the region, etc. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, UNESCO supported the professionalization of the teaching service, whereas in Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Suriname it supported the development of the Open Education Resources, ICT in Education Policies and Master Plans to improve the use of ICT in education. In Jamaica, UNESCO focused on governance and quality assurance mechanisms in the tertiary education system through a revision of the Tertiary Education Strategy and the development of better '*vocationalized*' education programmes.

UNICEF has been another major player in this area. Its Lifelong Learning programme has improved education and development outcomes and create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for boys and girls, including in emergency situations. Its contributions at the policy level across the region have been significant, as shown by the following examples.

1. In Suriname, UNICEF contributed to the preparation of a strategy promoting positive learning and inclusive environments for all children and adolescents by strengthening national frameworks, policies, plans and standards to increase access to high-quality, equitable, inclusive, and holistic early childhood development.
2. In Guyana, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in developing the reintegration policy for adolescent mothers into the formal school system.
3. In Belize, UNICEF supported the development of early childhood development policies, whereas in Jamaica it supported the implementation of the multi-sectoral national strategic plan for early childhood development.
4. In Jamaica, UNICEF supported the *First 1000 Days Strategy* entitled the "*Jamaica Brain Builder Programme*" aimed at facilitating early access to quality educational development for all children aged 0 to 3, including those with disabilities.

In Belize, UNICEF launched "U-Report", a mobile polling platform for the collection of real time data and perspectives on various social problems and solutions.<sup>34</sup> In Jamaica, it supported the establishment of incentive systems and policies to address youth demand for labour and the re-integration of vulnerable youth into learning or employment opportunities. In Suriname, UNICEF supported research on violence against children and the establishment of the country's first interrogation studio for hearing adolescents in a child-friendly way and environment.

ILO has facilitated social dialogue at the regional level between employers' and workers' organizations, resulting in the amendment by CARICOM's Heads of Government of the Treaty of Chaguaramas to

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<sup>33</sup> Especially, in the areas of quality assurance, sustainable financing models and innovative and technology-enabled pedagogical approaches

<sup>34</sup> Over 2,000 people of all ages registered with the platform in the first few months of its launch and polled on issues such as violence in schools, child marriage, water and sanitation, health and more. This data complements traditional sources to guide planning.

include representative bodies of labour and the private sector.<sup>35</sup> It has also supported a mapping of youth employment interventions in nine Caribbean countries,<sup>36</sup> generating crucial information for the design of future development cooperation. At the country level, ILO has assisted Antigua and Barbuda by promoting greater linkages between education and the labour market through the revision of its Technical and Vocational Education and Training policy. It has further assisted Belize with the establishment of a national Tripartite Sector Skills Advisory Committee for the tourism sector tasked to provide guidance on human resource development in the tourism sector.

In Guyana, UNDP supported 154 Amerindian communities in establishing business ventures. Further, in Guyana, UNDP and FAO helped establish an alternate dispute resolution mechanism for Amerindian land titling, a critical safeguard of their livelihood. FAO and WFP in Dominica built the capacity of farmers post-hurricane Maria through agribusiness training, conditional cash transfers and the distribution of materials for greenhouses, beehives and fishing gear. In Jamaica, UNDP supported sustainable financing for youth skills development needs in Technical, Vocational Education and Training and reintegration of vulnerable youth into learning or employment opportunities. In Belize, UNHCR focused on the social integration and livelihood opportunities for Persons of Concern (PoC).<sup>37</sup>

### Improving Social Protection, Social Inclusion and Equality

UNICEF and WFP have been key players in the area of social protection. UNICEF's social protection programme has improved national systems and policies to address multiple deprivations that affect the most vulnerable boys and girls. The areas of focus include direct support to strengthen national and sub-national human and institutional capacities to develop and deliver inclusive and equitable social protection systems, strengthening evidence generation to support decision-making and monitoring and enhance national systems that govern the volume, efficiency and impact of invested resources. In Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Montserrat and Anguilla, UNICEF contributed to the development of policy and legislation on social protection. In Guyana, UNICEF and the Inter-American Development Bank updated the mapping of social protection systems. UNICEF, in partnership with the OECS Commission, supported capacity building on shock responsive social protection focused on Dominica. In Belize, UNICEF and ILO supported the organization of several events on social protection. In Suriname, UNICEF's focus was also on access to Adolescent Friendly Health Services. In Trinidad and Tobago, UNICEF and UNDP launched a discussion of National Measurements of Multi-Dimensional Poverty to inform the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, whereas ECLAC carried out an analysis of the situation of people living with disability. As part of Trinidad and Tobago's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), an Accessibility Code was developed by Bureau of Standards for Accessibility and was included in the regulations of the Planning and Facilitation of Development Act. In Suriname, UNFPA helped with the development of a domestic violence form, as per the Domestic Violence Act, and strengthened the capacity of first responders to utilize the form, eventually improving data availability in this area.

WFP contributed to the research and advocacy agenda to understand the use of social protection and to help meet the needs of the most vulnerable in crisis. Six case studies from Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago and two case studies focused on COVID-19 Responses

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<sup>35</sup> This will help to ensure that employers' and workers' representatives have a voice on regional integration matters, such as movement of workers across the region, skills recognition and regional labour policies.

<sup>36</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>37</sup> A person of concern is any person whom the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, considers a refugee, internally displaced person (IDP), asylum seeker or stateless person, with some additional persons not fitting these criteria.

in Aruba and Saint Maarten and a regional review of social protection and disaster management in the Caribbean were published, highlighting best practice and experience from the region. The research complements a broader effort by WFP to link social protection and disaster management in the region and has been pursued in parallel to a series of regional and national cooperation events, advocacy efforts, training, workshop and country level support. In 2020 the use of social protection to respond to crisis increased exponentially with the COVID-19 Pandemic and WFP provided tailored support through leveraging information, south-south cooperation and technical assistance to national governments.

A major contribution of the UN system in this area has been in response to hurricanes (such as Maria, Irma and Dorian). WFP in collaboration with UNICEF supported the Government of Dominica to launch Emergency Cash Transfer Programmes with the objective supporting affected households and children. The programme ensured adequate access to food and other essential needs for 8,300 vulnerable households (25,000 people) affected by the hurricane. UNDP supported the Emergency Employment Programme (EEP) in Dominica, providing the most vulnerable populations with opportunities for livelihoods recovery through the provision of temporary employment for clearing and sorting debris, as well as reduction of health risks associated with the debris formed from the hurricane. WFP provided direct support to women, children, elderly people, chronically ill, physically or mentally-challenged persons, impacted by the hurricane.

## **5. A Healthy Caribbean**

This MSDF outcome area is underpinned by two broad objectives:

1. *Universal Access to quality health care services and systems improved*
2. *Laws, policies and systems introduced to support healthy lifestyles among all segments of the population*

The focus of UN's work in this area has been on maternal mortality, adolescents birth rate, neonatal mortality, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and increases in the incidence of non-communicable diseases, well-being, nutrition and food security, and water and sanitation. From early 2020 and onward, a major theme of the UN's work in the region has been the Covid-19 response. It is notable in this area that the UN system was quick in its support for the region in response to onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The planning and preparedness response to COVID-19 was delivered in an integrated fashion in the following areas - Coordination, Planning, and Monitoring; Risk Communication and Community Engagement; Surveillance Rapid Response Teams and Case Investigation; Points of Entry; National Laboratories; Infection, Prevention and Control; Case Management; Operational Support and Logistics; Maintaining Essential Health Services; Deployment of COVID-19 Vaccines; Research. This will be a major area of work going forward that will require further inter-agency coordination and integration, and even joint delivery. Key aspects of this work in the coming months and years will be the administration of COVID-19 vaccines, maintenance of essential health services during pandemics, and strengthening of public health functions towards health security in context of emerging and re-emerging diseases.

In the area of child, maternal and adolescent health, UNICEF has delivered its Health Promotion programme to strengthen access to and quality of health and related services and systems for children and adolescents. In Suriname, UNICEF has supported immunization and maternal and new-born health, enhanced the country's institutional framework and capacities to plan, introduced the concept of baby-friendly hospitals, and provided technical assistance to the Country Coordinating Mechanism on fight against HIV. UNICEF has also supported the scaling-up of the Early Childhood Development programme, focused on adolescent-friendly health services, to hard-to-reach areas in the interior. UNICEF has further supported vaccination in hard-to-reach areas in the interior by promoting



innovative solar-powered vaccination refrigerators and supporting the outreach of dropouts. It has also supported the dissemination of information on vaccination-related topics. In Belize, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNFPA and WHO/PAHO, has supported the Ministry of Health in launching the Comprehensive Adolescent Health Strategy, its implementation plan, as well as standards and norms for adolescent health. UNICEF has also supported the remodeling and equipment of laboratories. In Suriname, UNICEF and WHO/PAHO supported certification of Baby Friendly Health services. As such, 12,000 prenatal control cards; 10,000 prenatal clinic cards and 200 counselling cards for the Infant & Young Child Feeding and Essential Care of the New-born were distributed to all health clinics ensuring critical information for the care of at least 10,000 newborns were transmitted to mothers and caregivers. In Barbados and the OECS, orphans, vulnerable children and men who have sex with men were served with nutritional and prevention packages to meet the needs of those affected or infected by the AIDS epidemic. In addition, UNICEF provided more than 40,000 affected people, including 17,000 children in region access to drinking water and purification tablets to save lives and prevents the outbreak and transmission of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhea. In Trinidad and Tobago, UNDP and UNV provided additional medical professionals for primary health centers, particularly in underserved rural areas.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname, UNFPA and WHO/PAHO have supported the development of policies around Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), expanded the use of contraceptives through advocacy, technical and financial assistance and promoted SRH rights. In Jamaica, UNFPA has provided capacity building assistance in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes in support of sex workers. Further, throughout the region UNFPA has supported the design and delivery of a comprehensive sexuality education programme. In Antigua and Barbuda, UNFPA supported the development of a National Action Plan to Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy, establishing a multi-sectoral partnership to improve adolescent health with a focus on decreasing the adolescent fertility rate. In Barbados, UNFPA and WHO/PAHO supported the development of the National Strategic Adolescent Health and Development Plan in line with the Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AAAH!) guidelines. Moreover, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health of Jamaica in training and certifying over 80 clinicians and other health care providers in the assimilation and application of the Adolescent Health Standards in the delivery of quality services to adolescents in clinics and other health care settings. UNFPA further facilitated the training of over 60 Caribbean youth leaders to advocate for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The UN has also addressed the increasing trend of major communicable diseases, eliminating HIV/AIDS's mother-to-child transmission, and implementing the "Test All, Treat All" strategy to reach the UNAIDS "90-90-90" targets. The UN has been instrumental in implementing the Global Fund HIV/TB programme. Through collaboration with WHO/PAHO, CARICOM, CARPHA, PANCAP, UNICEF, UNAIDS and the CDC, the region has moved towards the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. In Trinidad and Tobago, UN's support led to increased access to 'Treat All' by making ARVs more affordable and available. In Belize, WHO/PAHO supported the development of the new National HIV/TB/STI and Hepatitis Strategic Plan, whereas UNDP supported the expansion of the formal system for testing, surveillance and data gathering on HIV/AIDS and TB. With UN support, Guyana expanded the services and obtained the drugs necessary to provide for a higher number of people living with HIV as a result of the adoption of the "Treat all" policy. The capacity of nurses in the regions in Guyana to deliver better comprehensive HIV services was also increased and an online system for reporting AIDS epidemic was made available for planning and monitoring. Suriname as well was supported in adopting the "Treat All" policy. In Jamaica, UNDP supported the training of *pro bono* lawyers to support strategic litigation/key population case management. In Guyana, data pertaining to Elimination Initiative of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV was collected from the years 2013-2016 from all regions. In Belize, UNDP trained surveillance

teams consisting of more than 500 health care personnel to participate in the surveillance of TB and HIV in their local communities and strengthened the capacities of all laboratory staff nationwide on topics such as infection control, parasitology, molecular biology, standard practices in blood bank, HIV/AIDS, biosafety and waste management, allowing them to conduct better specialized medical tests. In Belize, UNDP supported the development of the National Tuberculosis Strategy and the National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination, as well as the update of TB guidelines within the TB/HIV continuum of care algorithms. In Guyana, UNDP improved access to care for leprosy and improved the capacity of health care providers on the use of the chronic illness care model, including early diagnosis of multi-drug resistance in tuberculosis and antimicrobial resistance.

In the area of non-communicable diseases, the UN system has supported the development of policies and legal instruments, built capacity of institutions and supported actions to address the main challenges. In the British Virgin Islands, WHO/PAHO supported the development of an E-Health Strategy and Knowledge Management, whereas in Belize the development of a National Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Obesity. Guyana was supported on the management of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases to reduce diabetes in pregnancy and diabetic retinopathy by building national capacity for health care providers on the use of the chronic illness care model and the chronic care passport. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago received support on access to NCD screening and preventive services through smear testing, breast examinations, prostate evaluations, blood pressure and glucose testing, and demonstrations on cessation of smoking and healthy eating. In Guyana, where suicide rates are among the highest in the Caribbean, WHO/PAHO supported a dialogue on suicide in the Parliament. WHO/PAHO also helped with the training of doctors on mental health and supported outreach activities on violence against women and children.

In the area of healthy lifestyles, UNESCO launched the Caribbean Sport Compass, elevating sport and supporting youth-led grassroots programmes dedicated to youth empowerment and sustainable development through sport. In Suriname, UNICEF supported Child Healthy Schooling, which included early diagnosis, treatment and follow up of defects/abnormalities, health education and piloting the implementation of growth charts.

A number of Eastern Caribbean countries/territories (Anguilla, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia) developed policies and legislation geared at Expanding Health Financing and Increasing Fiscal Space for universal health care. In collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), WHO/PAHO launched a Special Initiative on Climate Change and Health in SIDS.

### **3. A Safe, Cohesive, and Just Caribbean**

This MSDF outcome area is underpinned by two broad objectives:

- 1. Capacities of public policy and rule of law institutions and civil society organizations strengthened*
- 2. Equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety reinforced*

In Belize, UNDP supported the establishment of the first Crime Observatory platform, the major repository of crime data. Through the observatory, key technical officers received training on criminal data analysis, infographics and data visualization, GIS and spatial data representation. UNDP also supported the development of a training module for justice officials, covering topics such as interviewing children and best interest decision making. In Jamaica, UNICEF supported the Crime Observatory-Integrated Crime and Violence Information System and the formulation of the 2016-2017 Report on Children and Violence.

In Jamaica, UNDP provided training for court staff on case management.<sup>38</sup> Guyana was supported to develop a “new” Juvenile Justice legislation, which raised the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years, prohibited the use of corporal punishment in detention centers and promoted the use of alternative sentencing. In Jamaica, UNICEF assisted with the training of members of the police force on specific aspects of Child Justice Guidelines, review of the National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence 2018-2023 and development of the Road Map for Ending Violence against Children. UNDP contributed to the increase in institutional and technical capacity of regional bodies, selected national government systems and community stakeholders to reduce risk factors that drive youth crime, violence, and victimization. Suriname standardized and disaggregated crime data sources to facilitate identification and measurement of youth risk and resilience factors. Trinidad and Tobago improved access to justice and the reform of its criminal justice system. In Jamaica, UNICEF supported the work of the Ministry of Justice, which resulted in the establishment of the Child Diversion Act. In Barbados, UNICEF reached out to about 20,000 students with messages on the prevention of interpersonal violence in schools. In Jamaica, UNICEF supported the Peace Management Initiative to establish a group of women called Mothers Against Murder, seeking healing and resilience-building following the deaths of their children. Furthermore, UNESCO led a Youth Engagement Campaign, aimed at creating avenues for youth involvement beyond being beneficiaries.

Under the End Violence Against Women programme, UN Women has supported the Government of Jamaica to develop a national strategic action plan on Gender-Based Violence. In collaboration with the Bureau of Gender Affairs within the Office of the Prime Minister in Trinidad and Tobago, UN Women trained over 30 trainers to support the implementation of the Foundations Programme towards ending violence against women. The Office of the Prime Minister has identified three institutions for the programme roll out which begins in the second quarter of 2019. In Antigua and Barbuda, UN Women supported the opening of the Support and Referral Centre, which provides coordinated services to survivors of Gender-Based Violence. In addition, a Women's Health Survey was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago, along with a qualitative study on gender-based violence with support from UNFPA and other stakeholders. In addition, UN Women has supported the development of sexual offences guideline, which is used across the region. The UN has also supported the development of gender protocols for judicial officers in Barbados, Belize, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. With support from UN Women and OHCHR, countries in the region received CEDAW sensitization sessions, as well as mock sessions resulting in five countries<sup>39</sup> reporting to the CEDAW Committee.

UNFPA has organized a series of training events on gender-based violence (GBV) throughout the region. In Jamaica, it supported the development of an online GBV Platform which allows survivors and populations at risk to GBV to access information and needed support. UNFPA partnered with UNICEF and IsraAid to conduct a rapid assessment of emergency shelters in Dominica, identifying factors that increase women and girls’ vulnerability to violence, gaps in services and barriers to access of services for survivors of gender-based violence. UNFPA has further engaged in awareness campaigns on GBV, male engagement for prevention and response, as well as the interlinkages between sexual and reproductive health throughout the region.

UNDP has supported dialogue, advocacy, research and education and to build capacity to address the challenges faced by the LGBTI community. OHCHR, through its Human Rights Advisors in the region, has produced knowledge materials and has conducted workshops on human rights themes, including gender, human rights mechanisms, human rights mainstreaming, disability, LGBTIs and the rights of people on the move. Overall, OHCHR has played a role in raising awareness on human rights through

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<sup>38</sup> Trainings were centered around data entry, case flow management, that should develop the statistics data capture and reporting system for evidence-based policy development and decision making in the courts.

<sup>39</sup> St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Antigua and Barbuda.

its participation in various campaigns. In Trinidad and Tobago, UNODC built capacity in anti-corruption within various ministries and agencies.

### **3. A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean**

This MSDF outcome area is underpinned by two broad objectives:

1. *Policies and programmes for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and universal access to clean and sustainable energy in place*
2. *Inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted for the conservation, the restoration and the use of ecosystems and natural resources*

In Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname, UNDP has supported the development of national adaptation and mitigation plans and leveraging grant funding to implement key interventions.<sup>40</sup> In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, and Antigua and Barbuda, FAO has supported the training of extension officers, government staff and small-scale farmers on a variety of agriculture-related topics.<sup>41</sup> In Saint Kitts and Nevis, FAO has supported the development of the Protocol on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in Fisheries and Aquaculture. In addition, FAO supported two pilot studies on vulnerability and capacity assessment in coastal communities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia. In Dominica, FAO has supported the development of value chains for cassava and other root crops promoted by conducting a market assessment to verify the existing and potential markets for cassava and its byproducts and facilitate improved farmer-buyer linkages. In Jamaica, UNDP has promoted the concept of irrigated school gardens as teaching aids in subjects/lessons including agriculture, climate change impacts, integrated science, environmental science, etc.<sup>42</sup> UNESCO has provided regional stakeholders with knowledge products on environmental adaptation through the promotion of the Science School concept and has undertaken a review of gaps and opportunities in the area of water education. In Jamaica, UN Women has supported the integration of gender considerations in the National Adaptation Plan.

In Guyana, UN Environment has supported the National Ozone Unit in implementing the Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase out management plan to meet the specific phase-out targets set by the Montreal Protocol. In Trinidad and Tobago, UNDP has supported the Ministry of Planning & Development to initiate actions related to low-emission development strategies and complemented the role of the National Ozone Unit on the certification scheme for the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning sector.

In the area of climate change mitigation, UNDP and UN Environment have had a range of activities in the region. In Jamaica, UN Environment supported the development of building codes and the National Building Policy, instituting the Net Zero Energy policy for new construction. It also facilitated the calculation of the national fuel economy baseline. UNDP Jamaica supported a training programme on renewable energy and energy management and an assessment of energy education at post-secondary level with recommendations for an improved curriculum. Additionally, Investment Grade Energy Audits for six public health buildings were undertaken to facilitate retrofits with renewable energy and

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<sup>40</sup> These plans include cross sectoral and sectoral policies to enable and catalyze climate change adaptation a wide range of climate-related issues including water resources management, food security, infrastructural resilience, biodiversity conservation and health.

<sup>41</sup> I.e. climate smart livestock production, pest management and use of land, artificial insemination, etc.

<sup>42</sup> These irrigation gardens increase production of vegetable crops through increased yields and enhance opportunities to cultivate during periods of drought with decreased losses. Further, the income generated from the gardens is reinvested into the agricultural programme and/or used to supplement other budget areas such as sports.

energy efficient technologies. In Belize, UNDP supported the establishment of the Green House Gas (GHG) inventory system and the training of government officials on the estimation of greenhouse gas inventories. UNDP has assisted Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago with the preparation of standard communications and reporting to the UNFCCC.

In the area of biodiversity and management of natural resources, UN Environment, FAO and UNDP have been active players in the region. In Guyana, UN Environment supported the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the establishment of a Biodiversity "Clearing-House Mechanism" for the Caribbean region to ensure that all governments have access to biodiversity information and technologies. In Jamaica, UN Environment supported the development of strategies and action plans for the reduction of marine litter due to land-based activities. In Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Belize, UN Environment facilitated the update and implementation of the National Biosafety Framework, as well as the promotion of integrated water, land and ecosystems management approaches. In Belize, UNDP supported the development of a "sustainable financing policy for biodiversity management", informed by a national Biodiversity Expenditure Review and Financial Needs Assessment. The support package also included the development of enabling regulations for water use under the National Integrated Water Resources Management Act. With FAO technical support, the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines updated fishery-related legal and policy frameworks to incorporate the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing compliance and developing the capacity of stakeholders for enforcement. In Trinidad and Tobago, FAO also supported the development of a Management Information System (MIS) for the monitoring of protected areas. FAO also supported the creation of national land banks programmes in Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In Guyana, UNDP has strengthened the capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency in the enforcement of mining-related environmental regulations, including the agency's ability to oversee miners' adherence to the regulatory framework.

The area of disaster risk management has been a crucial part of the UN's work, given that Small Island Developing States are fragile and vulnerable to disasters both economically and ecologically. In Guyana, FAO and UNDP supported a review of DRM policy in agriculture and the establishment of the Agriculture Disaster Risk Management Committee and provided practical training to farmers and extension officers on early warning systems and use of climate data for evidence-based decisions. Also, in Guyana, UNICEF has supported the Civil Defense Commission with the operationalization of the Regional Disaster Risk Management System in the areas impacted by the Venezuelan migration situation. UNICEF led regional trainings in Emergency in Education focusing on the review and strengthening of plans for school systems to prepare, mitigate and respond to national disasters with special emphasis on psychosocial support. In Barbados and the OECS, UNDP supported the development of an Early Warning System toolkit for the region<sup>43</sup> and provided training to first responders in critical areas related to medical triage, search and rescue and conflict resolution. In partnership with CARICOM's CDEMA, WFP supported national and regional capacities in end-to-end supply chain management, logistics coordination and emergency telecommunications to improve future emergency response efforts, which accompanied the repositioning of logistical assets for humanitarian response in the region.

The experience of the region with the most recent climate-related disasters in 2017 and 2019 revealed key limitations and challenges to a more efficient regional emergency response, particularly in high-impact or multi-impact scenarios. WFP in cooperation with UN agencies partnered with CDEMA and

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<sup>43</sup> The toolkit includes a repository of successful Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies from the field for establishing EWS and identifies guiding principles that create a strong foundation for the designing or strengthening of EWS at varying levels and within different sectors.

its Participating States to strengthen the regional response mechanism focusing on preparedness actions and facilitating the rapid provision of WFP's support in times of crisis. Areas of focus includes end-to-end supply chain management, logistics coordination and emergency telecommunications to improve future emergency response efforts, accompanied by the pre-positioning of logistical assets for humanitarian response in the region and digitization of relief management and logistics systems within CDEMA through the development of a supply chain management system. At the core of the work on disaster risk management has been the support to the professionalization of emergency responder and disaster management officials through knowledge transfer and capacity building. Direct support has also been activated in emergencies such as the COVID-19 Logistics support and emergency telecommunications after the Hurricane in Dominica and Bahamas.

UN Women has supported the gender mainstreaming of disaster responses. In the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria, the UN responded jointly by adopting a sectoral response to address needs around shelter, camp coordination and management, food security, health, social protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, logistics and emergency telecommunications, coordination, and early recovery. The UN's Flash Appeal raised over US\$19 million for response and relief efforts in Dominica. The appeal resources were jointly mobilized to address core needs and agencies worked together to support the Caribbean Disasters and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), as well as other international, regional and national entities.

In Belize, UNDP and UN Environment have supported the drafting of National Strategy and Action Plan for chemical waste management, as well as legislation related to chemicals management, and provided technical advisory services for climate change adaptation and mitigation. UN Environment facilitated the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention by Trinidad and Tobago through an Initial Assessment Report and training for relevant national stakeholders. In St. Kitts and Nevis, FAO has supported rapid environmental assessments of pesticide contaminated sites. Furthermore, UNDP has facilitated region's access to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donor resources.

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Quantifying the impact of these varied activities concisely is challenging for several reasons. First, the areas covered by the UN in the region are broad and encompass a variety of issues and sectors which need to be examined in detail individually. Second, at this stage the MSDF cycle is still ongoing, whereas solid results will take much longer to materialize and become sustainable. Third, and most important, a rigorous quantitative assessment of impact requires a large amount of data collected through dedicated surveys on the basis of well-defined indicators, baselines and targets. As has been discussed in previous sections of this report, such data is not available.

However, a few broad remarks can be made here based on the qualitative information collected through surveys and focus group discussions with stakeholders and the anecdotal evidence presented by UN agencies. In some areas, UN's footprint has been considerable and has furthered results that have been noted in this report. This is particularly the case with regards to support for the most vulnerable groups, in line with the key principle of "*Leaving No One Behind*". Although inter-agency coordination could have been stronger even in this area, the effect of all this body of work becomes obvious when one reads through the list of activities outlined in the previous paragraphs of this section. Those that have benefited the most from the UN programme have been the neediest and most vulnerable groups. For the most part, interventions in their support have been targeted, multi-sectoral and sustained over time. Also, the survey conducted with UN staff for this evaluation showed that about 77% of respondents thought that the MSDF had adequately incorporated human rights as a cross-cutting principle. A substantial majority of the respondents thought that the MSDF had addressed adequately the needs of women (more than 85%), children (more than 82%), and the most vulnerable groups (more than 73%).

In general, the agencies reported to employing gender sensitive approaches in the preparation of programme strategies. Many agencies use the gender marker to determine the level of gender sensitivity of their activities. Most agencies reported to have some form of gender sensitivity training – with some agencies, such as WHO, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, etc., having quite extensive gender training for all staff. Tools and several training opportunities to support gender mainstreaming are available in some agencies, but they are not shared across the UN system. Many agencies have “gender focal points” who monitor projects to ensure that gender-sensitive measures are taken during the implementation phase,<sup>44</sup> but they are not strongly coordinated at the regional level. Another challenge is the weak monitoring of gender at the regional and country/sub-regional level - there are few gender-based indicators and baselines, there is limited data collected and disaggregated by sex, etc.<sup>45</sup> Further, with few exceptions such UNICEF in Jamaica,<sup>46</sup> no systematic gender assessments or reviews have been conducted at the regional level by the agencies to assess, identify and prioritize strategic areas in which to introduce or strengthen gender responsive programming in alignment with the MSDF commitments.<sup>47</sup> Overall, the same situation applies to the country/sub-regional level. A gender assessment is critical to understand the current situation for women in the region and the role of the UN and the potential for a coordinated engagement in this area. A reinvigorated gender RTT could be the platform driving this exercise.

Two vulnerable groups that seem to have received limited support and attention from the UN system in the current programme cycle are persons with disabilities (PwDs) and migrants. This point came up in a number of focus group discussions conducted with national stakeholders, especially representatives of civil society. Also, in the survey with national counterparts, only about 30% of respondents thought that the MSDF has adequately incorporated the rights of PwDs as a cross-cutting principle. On the issue of migration, civil society stakeholders noted that the UN needs to do more to complement the lack of national level coordination and ownership on refugee matters by the governments.

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44 Agencies like UNICEF include a regional gender advisor who provides support to country offices in the region.

45 There are some opportunities for sharing information of gender across the UN system – i.e. UNICEF is using its result assessment module (RAM) which contains 25 indicators to measure changes in gender equality and women’s empowerment.

46 UNICEF Jamaica conducted a Gender Programme Review (GPR) in 2019. The review provided necessary support to assess, identify and prioritize strategic areas in which to introduce or strengthen gender responsive programming in alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan (GAP II) 2018-2022. The results of the GPR have helped the programme team to shift towards a more integrated, holistic and gender transformative approach in the implementation of the country programme across the different programmatic areas. The results also lay a solid foundation for a more gender sensitive consideration of strategies as the office approaches a new programme cycle.

47 FAO’s Sub-Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (SLC) recently rolled out a gender stocktaking exercise that will determine if recommendations from a similar stocktaking exercise (2016) were implemented. Such exercises will be conducted every four years to continuously record progress on the mainstreaming of gender into FAO’s work areas. UNICEF Suriname is planning a Gender Programme Review (GPR) for 2021 in line with the new CPD preparation. UN Women is of course an exception in the sense that its programme is specific to gender equality, so every assessment places gender at the center.

### 4.3. EFFICIENCY

The MSDF was motivated by the need to lower transaction costs in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of UN activities in a region that consists of small states/territories with common challenges and a common regional integration vision. Additionally, a number of agencies are non-resident, necessitating closer inter-agency coordination. This section provides an assessment of the efficiencies created by the MSDF by focusing on key parameters closely associated with an efficient management of the regional programme. The following are the main dimensions that will be examined:

1. Adequacy of the infrastructure underpinning coordination among UN agencies;
2. Extent of cooperation within the UN system in planning and implementing activities jointly, which enables pooled efforts and synergies;
3. Quality of UN's collaboration with the region's governments;
4. Quality of UN's collaboration with the regional bodies and development partners.

#### 4.3.1. Coordination Infrastructure

At a fundamental level, the “multi-agency” and “multi-country” nature of the MSDF necessitates effective coordination among the agencies and the countries involved. With the approval of the MSDF 2017-2021 and the governments' formal endorsement of it, UN agencies (both resident and non-resident ones) adopted the “Delivering as One” approach, which mandates joint planning, reporting and implementation. Moreover, the approach foresaw applying a joint project implementation modality, wherever feasible, to promote efficiency and leverage their experience, expertise and resources. This approach is an important factor of efficiency because it allows for complementarities, synergies, savings, reduced transaction costs for the counterparts, and a range of other benefits. This was actually one of the main motivations behind the recent restructuring of the institution of the UN Resident Coordinator (UN RCO). Given the importance of inter-agency cooperation, how has collaboration within the UN family unfolded in the context of MSDF region? This question will be the main focus of this section of the report.

The operationalization of the MSDF has been facilitated by the six respective RCOs, as noted in the previous sections of this report. Prior to mid-2019, the capacities of the RCOs were limited and insufficient to facilitate more efficient maintenance of business between UN agencies and national partners. Since then, the capacities of the six RCOs have been strengthened with staff and resources and have increasingly improved the coordination of the respective UNCTs, ensuring that the work of the agencies supports the development priorities of the respective countries and territories based on commitments made in the MSDF. The important role of the RCO institution was recognized by UN staff responding to the online survey for this evaluation. About 65% of respondents thought that “*the RCO has played a crucial role in coordinating agencies*”, whereas about 70% thought that “*the recent restructuring of the RCO function is a positive development that will strengthen UN coordination and effectiveness*”.

The table below summarizes the staffing capabilities of these six RCOs. Overall, the RCOs are small in size and typically include, in addition to the RC, a team leader and a data management/results monitoring staff. Most of these offices also include an economist, a communications officer, as well as a human rights adviser (the latter funded by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). While RCOs such as Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago consider existing capacities sufficient, the other RCOs have identified the need for additional capacity. The Barbados and the OECS RCO, for example, requires additional coordination capacity across the 10 jurisdictions it covers, given its MCO nature and large geographic coverage. The Belize RCO lacks capacity in the core area of development finance and strategic partnerships, as well as a full-time programme



communication and advocacy.<sup>48</sup> The Jamaica RCO has identified the need for a dedicated operations/administration assistant/officer.

Table 8: Staffing of RCOs

<i>Barbados and the OECS</i>		<i>Belize</i>		<i>Guyana</i>	
1.	Resident Coordinator	1.	Resident Coordinator (non-resident)	1.	Resident Coordinator
2.	Senior Development Coordination Officer	2.	Strategic Planner/ Team Leader	2.	Strategic Planner/ Team Leader
3.	Economist	3.	Economist	3.	Economist (post ‘gapped’ as of April 2021)
4.	Communications & Advocacy Officer	4.	Data Management Officer	4.	Peace & Development Adviser
5.	Junior Communications Consultant	5.	Communications & Advocacy Officer (UNV)	5.	Partnership & Development Finance Officer (post vacant from July 2020 – April 2021)
6.	National Human Rights Officer	6.	Human Rights Adviser	6.	Human Rights Adviser
7.	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	7.	RC’s Executive Assistant	7.	Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting Officer
8.	Coordination Specialist	8.	Driver	8.	Communications & Advocacy Officer
9.	Data and Results Monitoring			9.	Executive/Coordination Associate
10.	Information Management Assistant			10.	Driver
11.	RC’s Executive Assistant				
12.	Administrative Executive Associate				
13.	Driver				
<i>Jamaica</i>		<i>Suriname</i>		<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>	
1.	Resident Coordinator	1.	Resident Coordinator (non-resident)	1.	Resident Coordinator
2.	Strategic Planner/ Team Leader	2.	Strategic Planner/ Team Leader	2.	Strategic Planner/ Team Leader
3.	Economist	3.	Peace & Development Adviser (Regional)	3.	Economist
4.	Partnership & Development Finance Officer	4.	Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting Officer	4.	Peace & Development Adviser (Regional)
5.	Senior Human Rights Advisor	5.	Programme Communications & Advocacy	5.	Partnership & Development Finance Officer
6.	Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting Officer	6.	RC’s Executive Assistant	6.	Human Rights Adviser
7.	Communications & Advocacy Officer			7.	Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting Officer
8.	RC’s Executive Assistant			8.	Communications & Advocacy Officer
9.	Driver				

<sup>48</sup> The current communication capacity is temporary, and hence considered insufficient.

- |    |  |              |                          |
|----|--|--------------|--------------------------|
| 7. | Coordination<br>(until April 30, 2021) | Consultant9. | RC's Executive Assistant |
|    |  | 10.          | Driver                   |

Coordination among UN agencies and national partners in the context of the MSDF was envisaged to take place through a number of mechanisms and structures expected to facilitate the implementation of the MSDF programme. The coordination infrastructure envisaged in the MSDF document is shown in the figure below. The rest of this section will provide a brief description of this coordination infrastructure and how it turned out during implementation.

Figure 8: Coordination Structure for the MSDF



Regional Coordination Structures

Under the MSDF, the UNCTs and respective governments were expected to establish a set of joint formal structures at the regional level for guiding, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of joint activities.

1. The **Regional Steering Committee** (RSC) has been the main coordinating body at the regional level, designated under the MSDF to provide strategic leadership and ensure the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Delivering as One (DaO). RSC's membership has included the five Resident Coordinators and representatives from FAO, ILO, PAHO/WHO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and UN Women. The

Chair of the RSC has rotated annually – in 2017 the RSC was chaired by the RC in Jamaica; in 2018 by the RC in Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname; in 2019 by the RC in Guyana. In 2020, the RC in Barbados and the OECS chaired the RSC for half a year only, with the RC in Trinidad and Tobago chairing for the other half. The RC in Belize is chairing for the first half of 2021, with the RC in Jamaica taking over for the second half of the year. The RSC meetings have taken place every quarter and have been organized virtually. In the pre-Covid period, physical meetings took place once a year.

2. **Regional Coordination Meeting** (RCM) is another coordination mechanism at the regional level (this meeting is also known as the Annual Regional Meeting, due to its annual frequency). Unlike the RSC which involves only UN bodies, the RCM convenes signatory Governments and participating UN agencies annually to provide strategic guidance and oversight on the MSDF implementation. The main purpose of this meeting is for participants to discuss progress made towards the achievement of MSDF outcomes and the results of country level and multi-country or regional programme initiatives and agree the actions to be undertaken. Relevant non-governmental stakeholders such as civil society, private sector and development partners are invited to participate. Four RCM meetings have taken place in the current MSDF cycle – one in June 2017 in Kingston, Jamaica; one virtually in June 2018; one in 2019 in Barbados; and, one virtually in 2020 (organized by the Trinidad and Tobago RCO). The protocol documents (minutes) that have resulted from these meetings are quite useful as they contain a lot of information about the UN regional programme – which is particularly valuable in the absence of regional annual reports.
3. **Virtual Policy Networks** (VPN) were conceived under the MSDF to forge regional synergies and maximize the impact of the UN through the exchange of expertise and knowledge in specific priority areas, while ensuring cross-cutting fertilization with other thematic networks and country level actions. Although great in theory, the idea of VPNs has not functioned well in practice. Some attempts were made at the initial stage of the MSDF implementation to organize virtual meetings internal to the UN on specific topics. As of the time of the evaluation, no VPNs involving external partners had been established on a permanent and sustainable fashion as envisaged in the MSDF document. Conceivably, the 2020 pandemic presented an opportunity to accelerate the establishment of such virtual networks and strengthen their functioning, given the importance that virtual and distant collaboration took everywhere. However, this opportunity was not tapped because of a lack of initiative, leadership and clarity on leading roles in the establishment and support functions.
4. **Regional Task Teams** (RTT) were envisaged in the design of the MSDF around operational issues: *Communication, Monitoring & Evaluation, Partnership & Resource Mobilization; and Operations*. Their membership was expected to include experts and focal points from across different agencies and the six UN Country/Sub-region Teams. These teams were expected to discuss issues of relevance, solve problems and agree on common approaches across the region. In reality, of the four areas outlined in the MSDF document, only one regional task team was fully operational at the time of the evaluation – the **Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Task Team** (RMETT). This has been a crucial regional coordination structure that has met regularly over the course of this evaluation and has provided guidance and support to the evaluator.<sup>49</sup> Another regional structure that has emerged during the MSDF implementation and which was

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<sup>49</sup> RMETT is established to support regional and national mechanisms for effective programme management and accountability, while leveraging UN System advantages in the effective use of data and evidence to inform the work of the UN in the region. RMETT's purpose is also to work with government counterparts to identify M&E capacity, data and research needs related to the implementation of the MSDF and recommend or provide requisite support.

not foreseen in the MSDF document is the Team Leaders' Team, which has brought together in regular meetings team leaders from all six RCOs. The other task teams that had been initially established under the MSDF had stopped functioning by the time of this evaluation.<sup>50</sup>

#### Country (sub-regional) Coordination Structures

Also, a number of coordination mechanisms and structures were envisaged in the MSDF document to be established at the country level, complementing the regional structures described above and facilitating the oversight and implementation of CIPs/SIP.

1. **Joint National/United Nations Steering Committees (JNSC)** were expected to be established under the leadership of the respective Governments and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and be aligned with existing broader national coordination mechanisms where they exist. In the MSDF document, JNSCs were envisaged to be co-chaired by a Minister or senior official of the Coordinating Government entity or Ministry and the UN Resident Coordinator. In some countries/territories, the JNSCs have not been established or have not met in a while, but there have also been places like Belize where the JNSC has been functional. Many of the national or UN stakeholders surveyed or interviewed for this evaluation had not heard of this structure.
2. **Programme Management Teams (PMT)** and **Results Groups (RG)** were foreseen to be established in the MSDF document as coordination mechanisms for the implementation of CIPs/SIP at the country or sub-regional level. Incorporating UN and national stakeholders, these structures were envisaged to be responsible for monitoring progress on MSDF outcomes at the national or sub-regional level. The actual experience of the different countries/sub-regions under the MSDF with PMTs and RGs has been checkered. In jurisdictions like Jamaica or Suriname, these groups have either not convened or stopped functioning.<sup>51</sup> Trinidad and Tobago and Belize have had functional results groups,<sup>52</sup> but their visibility among national stakeholders and even some UN agencies is limited, based on interviews conducted for this evaluation. Barbados and OECS have four results groups composed of government, donor and UN partners, whose main focus has been resource mobilization and joint initiatives to advance the MSDF. For those jurisdictions that have had results groups, it was not possible to compile in the course of this evaluation a list of all result group meetings that had taken place in the current MSDF cycle. However, interviewees indicated that in general results groups do not meet regularly. Certainly, Covid-19 has been disruptive in this regard, but this seems to have

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<sup>50</sup> For example, the Caribbean Operations Management Team was a structure that was operation for some time, but stopped meeting. Regular monthly meetings were re-established during 2020, particularly focusing on information sharing and good practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings covered issues such as teleworking arrangements, back to office protocols, office retrofitting, etc. Meetings have not continued into 2021.

<sup>51</sup> Jamaica had joint government/UN results groups in 2017/2018, however they are no longer functional. In Suriname, the results groups were dissolved after restructuring the planning system.

<sup>52</sup> Trinidad and Tobago has four results groups, one for each pillar. Participants in each group come from agency technical officers and govt/national technical officers who carry out actions and initiatives related to the outcomes of each pillar. These groups are further supported by the national M&E team, with support from the RCO M&E expert and other UN M&E expertise as necessary. These groups meet collectively quarterly, and as individual groups as required to discuss CIP initiatives. 2020 was an anomaly due to the pandemic with just one physical meeting of all groups. The discussions of these groups contribute to the formulation of the annual CIP, monitoring and reporting on the actions undertaken, and accountability for resources and outputs that contribute to the achievement of results under the MSDF and NDS. Belize has four established results groups. They engage at varying degrees in the preparation of the annual Joint National UN Steering Committee Meeting. CIP development, monitoring and annual reporting is done primarily by the PMT, and not the results groups.

been the case even in the pre-pandemic period. Second, these meetings have been inconsistently attended by the agencies themselves. Some of the agencies do not attend these meetings regularly, thus their operations remain to some extent unknown to the other agencies. By not attending these meetings, they are also missing out on useful information shared in the meetings and opportunities for joint activities. There is also diversity in how these groups perform. Third, attendance by national counterparts is not strong. There is an opportunity here for better engagement with government representatives, and especially civil society and the private sector. But for this to happen results groups have to offer sufficient value for government officials to attend. The need for better functioning of the results groups was also reflected in the responses of UN staff to this evaluation’s online survey.

UNRCOs and UN agencies surveyed for this evaluation reported a range of other joint coordination structures at the country/sub-regional level summarized in the table below.

Table 9: Joint Coordination Structures at the Country/Sub-regional Level

<i><b>Barbados</b></i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SDG – Programme Team (SDG-PT)</li> <li>2. Operations Management Team (OMT)</li> <li>3. Communications Interagency Group</li> <li>4. Development Partners’ working groups (Results Groups)</li> <li>5. Development Partners Sub-Groups (4 Technical Working Groups)</li> <li>6. UN Emergency Technical Team</li> </ol>
<i><b>Belize</b></i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UN Gender Theme Group</li> <li>2. Operations Management Team</li> <li>3. Programme Management Team</li> <li>4. UN Emergency Technical Team</li> <li>5. UN Communications Group</li> <li>6. Spotlight Initiative</li> </ol>
<i><b>Guyana</b></i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PCG – Program Coordination Group</li> <li>2. UNETT (focus on new emergencies)</li> <li>3. OMT – Operations Management Team</li> <li>4. Monitoring and Evaluation team/Results group</li> <li>5. CIAG – Communications, Information and Advocacy Group</li> <li>6. Joint HIV/AIDS program</li> <li>7. RMWG – Refugee Migrants Working Group</li> <li>8. PAGE – Partnering for action on the Green Economy</li> <li>9. Spotlight Initiative</li> </ol>
<i><b>Jamaica</b></i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programme Coordination Group (subset of UNCT) – deputy level</li> <li>2. Operations Management Team (OMT)</li> </ol>

	3.	Communications Group (UNCG)
	4.	UNETT – UN Emergency Technical Team (climate-related disasters)
	5.	PSEA (Protection from Exploitation and Sexual Abuse) focal points and coordinators (group hasn't met yet)
	6.	UN Joint Team on HIV/AIDS (UNJT)
	7.	Group of Human Rights Focal Points
	8.	Spotlight Initiative
<b><i>Suriname</i></b>	1.	UN Communications Group
	2.	UN Operations Management Team
<b><i>Trinidad and Tobago</i></b>	3.	UN Communications Group
	4.	UN Emergency Technical Team
	5.	UN Operations Management Team
	6.	UN Gender and Human Rights Group
	7.	Joint MSDF/CIP Results Groups jointly chaired by UN Agency and Government representative
	8.	Spotlight Initiative

The agencies reported to actively attending several of these groups in the countries/territories involved – with the most common Communications Group, Operations Management Team. Also, a number of thematic groups have been set up at the country/sub-regional level, with the most common around the topics of Human Rights and Gender, Climate Change, Migration, HIV/AIDS. These groups are envisaged to serve as forums for the agencies to discuss common programme and operational issues, ideas for new business practices, joint implementation, advocacy and communication activities, and so on. Some of these groups have facilitated coordination in their respective areas. However, there has been no consistency in how they have been established and functioned both at the regional and country/sub-regional level. UN staff interviewed for this evaluation provided a variety of inconsistent opinions about the existence and usefulness of these groups, a clear indication of a lack of full awareness about these inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

In addition to these inter-agency coordination structures, the agencies have their regional centers mandated to coordinate the work of individual agencies at the regional level or even manage regional programmes. Table 10 below provides a summary of the main UN agencies' regional centers that cover parts of or the entire MSDF region (this table is constructed on the basis of responses received by the agencies themselves and in no way represents a systematic effort to categorize all regional offices/centers). Navigating the maze of these regional offices' is a daunting challenge due to their incredibly diverse mandates and geographical coverage. Mapping out what these regional offices do and what areas they cover in should be an exercise worth undertaking in the context of the MSDF with the objective of creating some understanding and identifying some room for rationalization and improvement with more effective inter-agency coordination as an ultimate objective in mind.

Table 10: UN Agencies' Regional Offices

Agency	Regional Office	Geographical Coverage
UNDP	Panama	LA and Caribbean
WHO	Washington	Americas and Caribbean
UNICEF	Panama	LA and Caribbean
UNHCR	Washington	Americas and Caribbean
FAO	Chile	LA and Caribbean
ILO	Peru	LA and Caribbean
UN Women	Panama	Americas and Caribbean
UNEP	Panama	LA and Caribbean
UNESCO Cluster Office	Chile, Cuba, Uruguay	Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago
UNFPA	Panama	LA and Caribbean
UNIC-DGC	Trinidad and Tobago	Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Curaçao, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Kingdom of the Netherlands overseas territories (Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius)
WFP	Panama	LA and Caribbean

Overall, as has been outlined in this section, the coordination infrastructure that underpins the MSDF does not function effectively and remains underdeveloped. While a number of coordination structures were put in place at the beginning of the MSDF cycle, they were subsequently discontinued or not maintained operational. Some stakeholders involved in the preparation of the MSDF see two distinct phases in how the MSDF infrastructure has operated. The phase prior to the delinking of the UNRCO functions from UNDP (in 2019) has been characterized by efforts to establish some of the infrastructure described in the MSDF document. Thus, a number of task teams and VPNs were initiated, efforts were made to develop a result framework, etc. However, during the transition to the new coordination format based on the UN reform agenda many of these initiatives stopped functioning.

A number of factors seem to have played a role in the creation of the situation described above. Certainly, the lack of capacities in the RCOs until recently has hindered serious efforts at addressing coordination shortcoming. This was the case not only before the reform when the RCO institutions were weak and poorly staffed, but also until recently when the RCOs beefed up their capacities with staff. Another factor seems to have been the change of leadership and staff and the weak mechanisms that were in place for storing institutional memory (the lack of culture of documentation is a challenge that will be explored further in this report).

With the RCOs now invigorated and with more resources available, there should be a coordinated and concentrated effort between the UN and the respective government to establish strong foundations for a permanent and efficient functioning of these coordination structures.

1. At the regional level, the UN should further strengthen the RSC and RCM by improving the participation of national partners and the quality of the inputs that are discussed and the outputs

resulting from these structures. The UN needs to establish a procedure for how these bodies accept the input of non-members and how they keep them informed. The VPNs and RTTs will require significant attention the UN leadership in the region. Given the acceleration of digitalization and virtual meetings due to Covid-19, the VPNs should become a much more effective platform for the exchange of information, expertise and knowledge across the region. The right incentives should be created for the engagement of not only UN staff in them, but also government and non-government counterparts.

2. Depending on the choices and actions taken in strengthening regional MSDF structures, at the country/sub-regional level, the UN should strengthen inter-agency cooperation mechanisms and link them more closely to the regional structures. The JNSC and Results Groups, especially, are crucial structures as they serve as platforms not only for coordination among the agencies, but also for coordination with key government counterparts. The following are some potential measures to be considered.
  1. JNSCs and Results Groups should be fully established and institutionalized in all countries. The upcoming MSDF cycle represents a good opportunity to reset the process. The frequency of result group meetings should be clearly determined and maintained throughout the cycle. Results Groups meetings should also become more effectively institutionalized by strengthening the tracking of their decisions and the reporting of their results (including quality meeting minutes).
  2. UN agencies should commit to attending more effectively results group meetings. This is not only part of the “Delivering as One” to which they have committed in principle, but also carries practical benefits for them. The management of agencies should create incentives for staff members to attend these meetings regularly.
  3. UNCTs in each country/territory should identify incentives that will make result groups more attractive to government staff, despite the opportunity cost that they entail for them. These incentives should be established on a country-by-country (territory-by-territory) basis, in line with the specifics of the context.
4. There is also a need to streamline the multitude of inter-agency groups that exist in the different jurisdictions beyond the essential structures such the JNSC and Results Groups. As a first step, it will be useful for the UN team to conduct a review of all the existing inter-agency coordination bodies to fully map existing structures. Based on such assessment, the UN can then decide how best to rationalize and streamline these groups, as well as introduce some uniformity in how they function. There might also be opportunities for building regional bridges that link similar groups across countries/territories.
5. With regards to the operations of the agencies’ regional offices, the UN should as a first step conduct a systematic assessment and mapping of what these centers do and what geographical areas they cover. Based on this assessment, the UN should identify options for rationalization in the work of these centers and, in particular, potential for stronger synergies and cooperation.

#### 4.3.2. Planning and Implementation

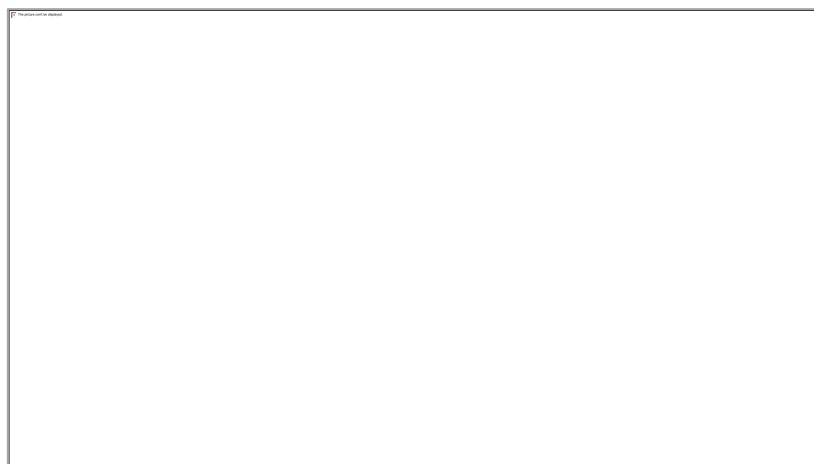
##### Planning

This section examines how the UN agencies have been planning and implementing jointly under the MSDF (M&E and reporting were reviewed in the previous section). Figure 9 below shows that planning in the region has taken place in two stages. First, the MSDF document has served as the overarching



regional plan, laying out the broad strategic framework for the activities of the UN system for all countries and territories that have signed up. Under the MSDF, six CIPs (one of them the SIP for Barbados and the OECS) have outlined the priorities and strategic framework at the national/sub-regional level.

Figure 9: Planning under the MSDF



In theory, the CIPs/SIP were expected to be derived from and be aligned with the MSDF, but, as has already been mentioned, planning in its entirety has not functioned as a cohesive and fully integrated process. First, not all countries/territories have had a CIP for the period in question (see Table 11 below for an overview of the situation). While countries like Belize, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago have had an annual CIP, Guyana has had only one CIP formulated in 2017 which has been extended until 2021 because of a political crisis and the onset of the Covid-19 crisis. Further, within the MCOs, some territories do not have CIPs, as is the case with Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten under the Trinidad and Tobago RCO which have no CIPs of their own primarily due to the tiny size of the UN programme in their territory.

Table 11: Country Implementation Plans under the MSDF

Country		National Framework
Barbados and the OECS	6.	Utilizes a Sub-regional Implementation Plan (SIP) or interagency joint work planning framework for aligning activities across jurisdictions and agencies.
	7.	Transitioning to a CIP as part of the MCO recommendations/UN reform.
Belize	8.	Belize has had an annual based CIP.
Guyana	9.	A CIP was developed for 2017, -2018-2019 and then extended twice until December 2020 because of a prolonged electoral period. UNCT consultations with the new Government, sworn-in in August 2020, over the draft 2021 CIP have not concluded. The UN COVID-19 Socio-economic response plan was completed in August 2020 and submitted to the new Government.
Jamaica	10.	Annual CIP starting 2017-2018, 2019, and one was still being developed for 2020 at the point of this evaluation.
Suriname	11.	Suriname has had an annual CIP.

But even when CIPs are developed and deployed, they are perceived by many UN staff members (based on interviews for this evaluation) as disconnected from the MSDF. This evaluation's research shows that there is overall disagreement or confusion among UN staff about the relationship between the MSDF and CIPs. In addition, the agencies have their own planning frameworks agreed with their government counterparts, further complicating the planning architecture. Ideally, all agencies operating in a particular country should derive their annual work plans from the CIP, ensuring full alignment between the two. However, based on agency responses to this evaluation's questionnaire, very few agencies admit to doing that. Furthermore, programming timeframes for the various agencies are not harmonized, leading to a patchwork of planning pieces that do not fit uniformly together. This situation often leads to a siloed planning process with individual agencies focused on their own "country programme documents" and demands from their own headquarters. To further complicate matters, the planning process of the various government entities has its own logic that does not align with the planning approach of the agencies, creating further pressures in favour of a siloed planning approach for the agencies. As one agency put it, "there are too many frameworks of planning – we spend more time trying to harmonize rather than get actual results".

The planning process clearly requires improvement and stronger coordination. First, there is a need for a higher level of awareness among agency staff about the broader UN reform, and in particular the relationship between the MSDF and CIPs. This matter might require some training which can be organized by the RCOs. Second, there is also a need for more efficient communication among agencies on planning matters. RCOs should keep the flow of information going with regards to planning processes at the country/sub-regional level. The RCOs should track the planning processes of the agencies and have a clear picture of the involved timelines. Based on this tracking, the RCOs should establish a simple and practical planning system (using standard online tools combined with UN-Info) and provide regular updates to the agencies. RCOs should also ensure that the agency planning process is coordinated with the CIP process through regular meetings with the agencies dedicated to the planning process. The RCO could also facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at the sectoral and national level. Agencies, on the other hand, should try to align their individual plans with the MSDF, and the CIP framework. Such programmatic alignment would help agencies reduce substantially reporting demands and improve UN's programmatic coherence from the ground to the MSDF level.

### Implementation

When it comes to implementation of the MSDF, the key question is how the agencies have worked together and coordinated on the ground, while carrying out their activities. This question about joint cooperation is particularly pertinent to the Caribbean region where agencies have rather stretched mandates, but small budgets due to the small size of the countries involved. Given the trade-off between the depth and breadth of their programming that individual agencies face, the best way to create depth (and impact) is through synergistic efforts between agencies, with each one deploying its comparative advantage.

First, it should be noted here that there are different types of cooperation that UN agencies could establish. At a minimum, they could exchange of information, expertise and knowledge. At a higher level, they could share contacts or provide other agencies with access to their networks. Cooperation could go further with agencies sharing inputs – staff, equipment, premises, etc. At the highest level, agencies could implement jointly towards shared objectives. These levels of cooperation are summarized in Box 5 below.

### Box 5: Levels of Cooperation

The following is a brief description of the levels of cooperation, listed in the order of increasing intensity.

1. Cooperation takes place through the sharing of information (lessons learned and knowledge).
2. Cooperation could take place by sharing not only knowledge and lessons, but also contacts and networks. For example, one agency that is already established in an area provides another agency with access to government partners, NGOs, academia, international expert networks, etc.
3. Cooperation takes the form of shared inputs, which may be staff, equipment, project premises, etc. For example, an agency may use another’s infrastructure (such as offices and vehicles) in a particular location where it has no presence.
4. Agencies contribute to shared objectives and strategies which makes their activities fully cohesive and synergetic. They work closely together to avoid overlaps and specialize in different activities that are fully synergetic. Efficiency gains, in this case, are the highest as agencies reinforce each other’s work.

Under the MSDF, most inter-agency cooperation has taken place at the first three levels – agencies have shared information and networks, knowledge and lessons learned, premises, etc. However, there have been several joint efforts at the implementation level. The following are some examples provided by the agencies.

1. The most important example of joint implementation in the current MSDF cycle has been the ***Covid-19 response***. This is an area where the agencies quickly reacted together to support the planning and preparedness response to COVID-19 across the region.
2. By virtue of its set up as an MCO, ***Barbados and the OECS team*** has implemented jointly several programmes across the sub-region. The table below profiles some key joint programmes under the Barbados and the OECS jurisdiction.

Table 12: Joint Programming in Barbados and the OECS

Joint Programme	UN Agencies	Countries
<b>Joint Programme on Social Protection and adaptive shock responsiveness</b>	UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UN Women & ILO	<u>Barbados</u> SLU, BDS, OECS
<b>Joint Programme on Human Security: Agriculture and women empowerment</b>	UN Women, FAO, UNDP & ILO	<u>Barbados</u> AB, BBS, SLU, GRE, DOM
<b>EnGenDER – Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience</b>	UNDP + UN Women & WFP	<u>Barbados</u>
<b>Joint SDG Fund – Blue Economy Financing for SIDS</b>	UNDP, FOA and UNEP	<u>Barbados</u> BBD, GRE, SVG

<b>Social Protection and Employability (MPTF Joint Programme)</b>	UNICEF, WFP, ILO	<u>Barbados</u> <u>AB, BVI</u>
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1. The *Spotlight Initiative* is the newest regional programme implemented by UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UNWOMEN in several Caribbean countries and focused on the gender-based violence against women and girls. The box below provides an overview of the Spotlight Initiative.

#### Box 6: Spotlight Initiative

The Spotlight Initiative, a global effort designed by the EU and the UN to tackle the gender-based violence against women and girls, finds its way of implementation both at the country and at the regional level. Its interventions are particularly focused on six main pillars: i) Laws and policies; ii) Institutions; iii) Prevention; iv) Services; v) Data; vi) Women’s movements.

The Regional programme in the Caribbean, launched in December 2020, is expected to provide a regional coordinated response to end all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Meanwhile the Country specific programme that includes the following countries: Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, contributes to the achievement of gender equality, social inclusion and protection of the human rights (aligned with SDGs 5 and 16) within each country at the national level.

In the context of regional implementation, the Spotlight initiative commenced on December 14th, 2020 and is expected to conclude by December 31st, 2022. During this period, it will focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts and will increase policy coordination and functional cooperation across the region to address family violence (FV).

Participating agencies have cooperated in contributing for the regional fund, complementing the EUR 50 million committed by the EU and the UN towards efforts across the region.

2. In the aftermath of *hurricanes Irma, Maria and Dorian*, the UN responded jointly by adopting a sectoral response to address needs around shelter, camp coordination and management, food security, health, social protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, logistics and emergency telecommunications, coordination, and early recovery.
3. The *Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative* (BFHI) is a longstanding global initiative implemented by WHO and UNICEF, aiming at protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding in facilities that provide maternity services.
4. The project “*Child marriage and early unions in Latin America and the Caribbean*” is another regional (including LA) initiative implemented by UNICEF, UN WOMEN and UNFPA.

5. The project “*Advancing Sustainable Development through Human Security, Climate Resilience and Women’s Empowerment in the Caribbean*” is funded by the Human Security Trust Fund and implemented jointly by UN Women, FAO, ILO, UNDP.
6. The “*Sustainable and Child Friendly Municipalities*” initiative, which started in 2014, is a collaboration between the Belize Mayors Association, the Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development, UNICEF and UNDP.

Overall, the number of joint programmes under the MSDF has been limited relative to what the agencies have implemented individually (as can be seen from the list above). Several of these projects are of a global nature, unrelated to the merits of cooperation under the MSDF. The potential for more joint work and greater efficiencies in the work of the UN system is far more significant.

Significant opportunities for joint programming lie ahead in the area of COVID-19 response (which has already been at the center of the work of the UN system in 2020). UN’s COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework has multiple dimensions which represent opportunities for multi-agency engagement, as can be seen in Box 7 below. Another area where there seems to be significant potential for joint work among the agencies is support for refugees and migrants, which involves multiple dimensions related to human rights, access to justice, economic recovery, social assistance, etc.

**Box 7: UN’s COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework**

UN’s COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework has multiple dimensions which represent opportunities for multi-agency engagement.

1. Health First: the health emergency around COVID-19 itself and the impact on the rest of the health system.
2. Protecting People: social protection for those who have lost jobs and income; basic services like education; access to security and justice services.
3. Economic Response and Recovery: recovering lost jobs, businesses and livelihoods is critical, particularly challenging with large informal sector.
4. Macroeconomic Response: debt burden, shrinking fiscal space, constrained international financial resources are all detrimental to countries
5. Social Cohesion and Community Resilience: lockdown effects on society; increased GBV/DV and suicides; testing resilience of communities.

In addition to the need for more joint programming, there are opportunities for stronger cooperation in the following areas:

1. ***Advocacy, Partnerships and Communications*** – At its conception, the MSDF was seen as “*an opportunity for the UN in the Caribbean region not only to strengthen regional communication and synergies, but also to promote public awareness of the SDGs*”.<sup>53</sup> However, joint UN communications and advocacy at the regional level have been limited. Participants in interviews for this evaluation pointed out that a significant effort was invested in completing the MSDF, but it was not well marketed and communicated, which eventually hindered its visibility among national stakeholders. The lack of visibility became obvious in the focus group

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<sup>53</sup> MSDF document.

discussions for this evaluation when some participants were largely unaware of the MSDF. Even among UN staff members the concepts of MSDF and CIP remain unclear – of the 101 respondents of this evaluation’s survey with UN staff, 35% were not familiar with the MSDF and CIP. This is partly a consequence of the lack of strong joint communications and advocacy at the regional (Caribbean) and country/sub-regional level. UN regional structures dedicated to communications and advocacy, such as the United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean area (UNIC), themselves lack the very visibility they were envisaged to promote for the whole of the UN.<sup>54</sup> Overall, the UN system lacks a joint communications and advocacy plan at the regional level. At the country (sub-regional) level the situation is slightly different - in some countries/territories joint UN communications strategies have been developed. Barbados and the OECS, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname have a joint communications strategy at the UNCT level. Belize had a joint communication strategy developed and approved for 2019, but it was not implemented or monitored. A new joint communication strategy and advocacy plan was under preparation at the point of this evaluation. Trinidad and Tobago does not have a joint communications strategy. The potential for synergies in joint UN advocacy activities is significant, especially around issues such as gender equality, disability, prevention of gender violence, and so on. The agencies are already doing some of this, but in an ad-hoc and fragmented fashion. As a first step, the UN should develop a joint Communications Strategy at the regional level. The development of joint communications strategies should be replicated at the country/sub-regional level under the coordination of the respective RCOs. The regional RTT should become fully functional and meet regularly to coordinate practical communications aspects across the region. UNIC should ramp up its profile and serve as dynamic center for the spread of information and promotion of advocacy on key issues that fall within its mandate. Ultimately, the objective in this area should be for the UN agencies in the region to deliver to external audiences stronger one-voice messages on key issues.

1. ***Gender*** – Due to its cross-cutting and normative nature, the UN system should cooperate more effectively at the regional level around gender mainstreaming, not only with regards to advocacy and awareness-raising, but also by supporting jointly the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation (i.e. gender-based violence), implementation of international commitments, economic empowerment and political participation of women, and a range of other topics. The UN system should aggregate agency efforts across territorial boundaries into a joint *gender advocacy and communication strategy* and *work plan* at the regional level adapted to the MSDF context. The agencies should also strengthen joint external communications on gender to ensure consistent messages and information and promote gender equality in external communications.
2. ***Research and Analytical Products*** – Another area that will benefit from stronger cooperation in the joint or coordinated production of research and analytical products at the regional level. There is clearly a need for a more coordinated approach and synergies by the agencies across the region of their analytical exercises such as assessments and reviews. This is a prolific area of work for the agencies, but which is rather fragmented at the moment. Under the coordination of the RCOs, the UN system should establish processes and mechanisms for the coordination of these activities. At a minimum, the agencies should establish a system for sharing amongst

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<sup>54</sup> UNIC’s mandate includes advocacy, outreach education and engaging in partnerships with different actors in society at different levels. The underpinnings of UNIC’s work are Human Rights, Development/SDGs, Climate Change, Peace and Security.

themselves information on planned analytical exercises which will be of interest to other agencies. The regional coordination mechanisms could include a standardized tool for tracking this type of work. The RCOs should play a more active role in disseminating this information among the agencies across the region and in facilitating joint activities.

3. **Trainings** – Another area that will benefit from greater cooperation among UN agencies is the conduct of trainings. This is another area where the agencies are heavily invested, but in a rather fragmented way. There is significant potential in this area for greater synergies, starting with joint assessments of training needs, joint delivery of training programmes, exchange of training content across agencies and countries/territories, etc. There are areas, like human rights-based approaches, results-based management, gender mainstreaming, environmental sustainability, etc., involving the same training principles, which makes standardized delivery across organizational or geographical boundaries effortless. Information about training plans by the various agencies should be collected at the regional level and disseminated with all the agencies through the coordination channels. RCOs should play a major role in coordinating this process and facilitating joint training programmes and capacity development activities, starting with their own.

In conclusion, achieving stronger cooperation in the implementation of the MSDF is not easy given the complexity of the context, the way the UN system at the regional level is structured, the weakness of the coordination infrastructure and the lack of strong incentives for collaboration. Also, the agencies' different rules and procedures make cooperation challenging. This is also reflected in the opinions of UN staff surveyed for this evaluation – only about 33% of respondents thought that “*the MSDF has created a clearer division of labor among UN agencies in the Caribbean*”, as opposed to 50% who thought that was not the case. Furthermore, only half of UN staff members thought that the MSDF has created a UN system that is more effective than the work of individual agencies. For all the challenges, there are opportunities for UN to create incentives for greater cooperation and more joint activities among the agencies, as pointed out in the paragraphs above.

#### 4.3.3. Resource Mobilization

The MSDF was expected to lead to better strategic positioning of the UN to leverage regional resources, thus also serving as a resource mobilization framework. To this end, the MSDF document envisaged the development of a joint “*Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy*” at the regional level under the leadership of the Regional Steering Committee. Such a strategy was expected to address funding gaps, focusing on non-traditional sources of financing and new partnerships. However, a regional resource mobilization strategy under the aegis of the Regional Steering Committee has not materialized. Efforts have been made to develop resource mobilization strategies by some individual RCOs involved with the MSDF. Currently, only Belize has a resource mobilization strategy at the UNCT level. Barbados and the OECS has developed a resource mobilization strategy for special initiatives like the “*COVID Multisectoral Response Plan*”, but there is no overarching strategy at the UNCT level. Jamaica was at the time of this evaluation in the process of developing a resource mobilization strategy. The other three countries (Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) have not developed such a strategy. Further, some agencies have their own resource mobilization strategies that are not coordinated with other agencies' strategies. Some agencies have regional resource mobilization strategies that encompass a much larger region – for example, FAO has a “*Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean*”, which is not coordinated with other agencies. Practical examples of joint resource mobilization are scarce. One such example in the current programming cycle is the UN's *Flash Appeal* in the aftermath of *hurricanes Irma and Maria*, which raised over US\$19 million for response and relief efforts in Dominica. The appeal resources were jointly mobilized to address core needs and

agencies worked together to support the Caribbean Disasters and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), as well as other international, regional and national entities.

This patchwork of resource mobilization strategies by agency, country or region needs to be rationalized and aligned more effectively. Given the limited development resources available for the upper or middle-income countries/territories in the region, it will be important for the agencies to avoid competition for donor funds and partnerships. Better coordination of resource mobilization efforts at the regional level will help ease such competitive pressures among UN agencies. The UN system should coordinate more effectively its fundraising activities and partnerships. The UN should develop a resource mobilization plan at the regional level for upcoming MSDF. The agencies as well should approach resource mobilization in a more coordinated fashion by being more cooperative in this area. The RCOs should play a major role in coordinating resource mobilization.

With regards to resource mobilization, the MSDF document identified a resource gap shown in Table 13 below. These resources were expected to be mobilized collectively or individually by the agencies in addition to their so called “secure” or core funding (also shown in Table 13). The resource mobilization effort was expected to be supported by all Resident Coordinators and UN agencies, committing themselves to transparency and coordination with other relevant agencies when needing to pursue individual and independent fundraising from development partners at the country level. These figures, while only indicative, were considered in the MSDF document as accurate as possible at the time of the document’s drafting. It should be noted, though, that the figure in red in the table above (total of 19,940,796 USD) was calculated incorrectly in the table presented in the MSDF document, representing a gap of about 2 m USD from the correct figure.

Table 13: Estimated Resources in the MSDF Document (in USD)

Priority Area	Resources Secured	Resources to Be Mobilised	Total
An Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean	43,966,796	26,040,235	70,007,031
A Healthy Caribbean	7,193,796	12,747,000	<b>19,940,796</b>
A Cohesive, Safe and Just Caribbean	39,172,309	32,363,524	71,535,834
A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean	105,058,851	162,299,147	267,357,998
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,391,752</b>	<b>233,449,906</b>	<b>428,841,658</b>

An effort was made under this evaluation exercise to estimate the amount of resources mobilized and spent by the UN agencies under the MSDF since 2017. Financial information was pulled from the UN-Info system and was combined with the financial information presented in the MSDF Annual Report for 2017-2018 or provided by some agencies in the course of this evaluation. The result of this procedure is shown in Table 14. The data presented here is sourced from the official online reporting tool (UN INFO) specifically developed by the UN System to collate UNCT reporting. Due to the incompleteness of the financial information available in UN-Info, the aggregation of financial data at the MSDF level failed to yield the complete picture, inclusive of all relevant agencies. Therefore, the table below presents no real value for financial analysis relative to this evaluation. This is a missed opportunity because the lack of financial information did not allow this evaluation to identify the total amount of money spent under the MSDF and assess the degree to which the MSDF’s resource mobilization plan was achieved.

The lesson than can be drawn from this experience is that the UN system at a fundamental level should be able to report in full accountability on the amount of money it has mobilized and spent in the region as a whole. This will require a solid data entry and quality assurance process for the financial



information that is captured in the UN-Info system. RCOs should monitor this process on a continuous basis and provide the necessary training to the UN agencies based on the challenges they identify in a practical manner.

Table 14: Planned and Executed Budgets under the MSDF (in USD)

Expenditure	2017-2018		2019		2020		Total	
	Planned	Executed	Planned	Executed	Planned	Executed	Planned	Executed
UN Women	-	-	357,303	358,007	3,076,729	-	3,434,032	358,007
UNDP	75,155,654	54,790,595	14,192,659	20,567,163	20,691,626	4,804,153	110,039,939	80,161,911
FAO	37,537,957	6,795,141	7,768,635	4,439,442	9,958,518	3,300,320	55,265,110	14,534,903
UNICEF	25,730,561	23,674,323	8,544,902	1,897,373	7,272,375	1,995,320	41,547,838	27,567,016
UNHCR	13,874,933	13,094,823	6,700,000	-	10,132,100	920,500	30,707,033	14,015,323
UNEP	6,042,912	3,699,640	2,539,005	1,074,136	3,448,779	542,081	12,030,696	5,315,857
ILO	-	-	1,975,387	1,541,714	1,765,404	802,904	3,740,791	2,344,618
UNFPA	2,369,788	1,670,934	483,775	407,512	1,191,385	316,097	4,044,948	2,394,543
IOM	-	-	718,513	718,072	1,746,091	1,686,234	2,464,604	2,404,306
OHCHR	1,225,883	1,260,495	560,457	522,003	804,319	537,469	2,590,659	2,319,967
UNAIDS	-	-	-	76,000	106,200	106,200	106,200	182,200
UNESCO	2,771,780	2,139,780	108,000	28,000	90,000	10,000	2,969,780	2,177,780
WFP	19,334,096	9,136,429	2,279,417	2,045,510	9,386,439	5,638,980	30,999,963	16,820,919
WHO/PAHO			308,374	273,875	1,673,435	615,042	1,981,809	888,917
UNCTAD	5,000,000	4,722,330	-	-	-	-	5,000,000	4,722,330
UNIDO	3,086,782	3,366,070	-	-	-	-	3,086,782	3,366,070
IAEA	3,206,837	3,540,684	-	-	-	-	3,206,837	3,540,684
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195,337,183</b>	<b>127,891,244</b>	<b>46,536,427</b>	<b>33,948,807</b>	<b>71,343,400</b>	<b>21,275,300</b>	<b>313,217,021</b>	<b>183,115,351</b>

#### 4.3.4. Engagement of Government and Non-Government Partners

In order to strengthen the relevance of the MSDF, it is important that a wide range of stakeholders, especially central government officials, be engaged throughout the MSDF process. This will strengthen ownership of the process and the identification of potential areas for collaboration and partnership and opportunities for joint financing where possible.

##### Cooperation with Governments

The UN is a long-standing partner of many government and non-government actors in the region. The agencies have provided important contributions to their counterparts in a variety of areas. Agency representatives are involved in key policy processes, which has led to the establishment of strong bilateral partnerships. This was confirmed by interviews for this evaluation in which most government representatives stated that the partnership with the UN had allowed them to achieve things they would have not been able to achieve on their own. Overall, the UN has certainly a good reputation and high visibility among government officials both at the national and sub-national level.

While individually the agencies have established good relations and cooperation with their respective counterparts, cooperation between the UN as a whole and regional or country/territory bodies can be further improved. A number of interviewees brought up the need for stronger coordination between the Government and the UN system. There are a number of challenges that constrain this coordination. First, the political instability in some countries has led to significant changes within government structures, making it difficult for the UN to engage efficiently. Further, inter-governmental coordination in some countries and territories remains weak, both horizontally and vertically.

Given the lack of strong SDG regional and national frameworks and coordination mechanisms, it has been difficult for the UN to engage respective government in a comprehensive process of coordination and consultation at the regional level. The best avenue for such engagement remains the existing regional infrastructure described in previous sections of this report. But as has already been noted, this infrastructure remains inadequately attended by government representatives and serves primarily as a coordination structures for the UN.

With the upcoming MSDF, there is an opportunity to strengthen coordination at the regional level between the UN and the respective governments. Further, given the upper and middle-income level status of the countries and territories in the region and reduced donor and UN core resources, it will be important for the UN to explore partnerships with government partners on the basis of cost-sharing. Cost-sharing will be difficult in the post-Covid reality, but this is something that the agencies should not lose sight of in the long run. However, for it to happen, agencies have to stay extremely relevant and competitive and have to offer services for which government partners are willing to pay from their budgets.

##### Cooperation with Non-Governmental Partners

Research for this evaluation found several examples of substantive engagement by UN agencies with civil society organizations (CSOs). This engagement has taken place in several forms. If the 32 responses by civil society organizations to this evaluation's online survey are taken as a representative sample of civil society in the region that have some form of interaction with the UN,<sup>55</sup> then 24 CSOs have been engaged in project implementation, 15 have been involved in advocacy, 15 have benefitted from training, and 8 have been involved in planning. Several examples of engagement of CSOs stand

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<sup>55</sup> It should be noted that the response rate for both government and non-government representatives to the surveys constructed for this evaluation was low, which certainly has a bearing on the validity of conclusions reached in this evaluation.

out. The Spotlight Initiative has engaged CSOs to further preventative measures. It aimed to improve technical and operational capacities of CSOs to address gender violence more effectively. UNICEF has engaged local and international NGOs to implement initiatives at the community level. UNICEF has also engaged grassroots organizations to explore innovative ways to respond to violence. UNICEF has further worked with CSOs to support the emergency response. UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago has engaged CSOs in consultations around poverty and citizen security programmes. It has partnered with several NGOs to implement projects on the ground. Some agencies have engaged CSOs at the planning stage of their programmes. UNICEF has been hosting Strategic Moments of Reflections with CSO partners, to reflect and build on lessons learned, and sustain strong programming ties. UNIC's Sustainability Network of Caribbean Civil Society facility supports civil society communications and advocacy, and communications capacity building.

For all these examples, the overall engagement of civil society at the regional level is still limited. Civil society representatives involved in focus group discussions for this evaluation referred to the UN programme across the region as too “*state-centric*”. Many were unfamiliar with the MSDF framework or document. CSOs find the UN system “*bureaucratic*” and “*not too easy to understand*”. There was general perception that civil society is not invited in the coordination meetings, which generally involve only the government. CSO representatives are interested to participate in joint steering committee and results groups meetings at the country/sub-regional level. Most CSOs had no experience being involved in the formulation of any form of UN programming, be it at the regional or country/sub-regional level. Very few had any information about the results achieved by the UN, especially at the regional level. Support for capacity development of the civil society sector appears to be quite limited.

Overall, the UN should engage civil society more effectively. Engagement should start at the planning stage, including the preparation of the MSDF. Furthermore, the engagement of civil society could be done in a more structured way, involving greater coordination among agencies. The fora for the engagement of national stakeholders should be opened to civil society representatives. CSOs should be involved more actively in the monitoring of results. Reporting at the regional and country/sub-regional level should include civil society. The UN should also explore greater opportunities for community-based interventions and service delivery through CSOs. Lastly, it will be important to have a more coherent approach at the UN level (across agencies and countries/territories) for how support to civil society, especially capacity building assistance, is designed and delivered.

The situation with the engagement of the private sector is even weaker. There are some examples of private sector participation in UN activities. For example, UNDP's Accelerator Lab has catalyzed innovative companies. Also, its COVID response has focused on supporting MSMEs. UNICEF has cooperated with two mobile service providers in Belize (Smart & Digi).

ILO has facilitated social dialogue between employers' and workers' organizations, resulting in the amendment by CARICOM's Heads of Government of the Treaty of Chaguaramas to include representative bodies of labour and the private sector.<sup>56</sup> The Spotlight Initiative is planning to promote private sector initiatives that prevent work-related spillovers of family violence and creating safe spaces at work. Still, this work is too fragmented, small-scale and engagement primarily takes place at the level of chambers of commerce. The UN should step up its engagement with the private sector to ensure that the private sector is harnessed as an agent of change towards the solution of development problems. There is also potential for the agencies to tap into private financing through partnerships with private companies. In Guyana, for example, the UN has been trying to foster private sector partnerships for access to sustained financing as a result of downsizing of funding in the region. The UN should take a

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<sup>56</sup> This will help to ensure that employers' and workers' representatives have a voice in important matters on regional integration, such as movement of workers across the region, skills recognition and regional labour policies.

more systematic and strategic approach at the regional and country/sub-regional level to engaging with the private sector.

#### 4.3.5. Engagement of Regional Bodies and Development Partners

Another indicator of efficiencies is the quality of UNCT's collaboration with the Government and development partners. Stronger collaboration means more synergetic interventions and fewer duplications and overlaps.

##### 1. Cooperation with Regional Bodies

Through its regional character, the MSDF was envisaged to address a number of regional challenges requiring cross-border approaches and solutions. As such, it was designed to allow for a sharper focus on common regional priorities, enhance regional initiatives and collaboration and enable knowledge sharing and cross-collaboration within the region.<sup>57</sup> Further, as has already been noted, the MSDF was conceived as a platform for development cooperation between the UN system and CARICOM, as agreed in the biennial UN-CARICOM meetings and was also expected to further collaboration with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The MSDF was also expected to contribute to the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (known as SAMOA Pathway).

The overall opinion of stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation is that the UN has not fully tapped that potential for cooperation with regional bodies. Although initial attempts were made to formalize the UN's relationship with CARICOM, cooperation with this crucial regional body has not lived up to its potential for a number of reasons, some of which are the following.

1. UN's engagement with CARICOM has been limited to high-level contacts, primarily taking place through the biennial joint high-level meetings<sup>58</sup> and CARICOM's participation in the UN's Annual Regional Coordination Meeting. While useful in maintaining contacts, these meetings have been far too few, far too high-level and far too formalistic to help forge practical cooperation projects on the ground. While there have been cooperation initiatives between CARICOM and several UN agencies,<sup>59</sup> there is definitely a need for better communications and stronger cooperation at the technical level, involving "*people to people contacts*" as one of the participants in this evaluation put it.

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<sup>57</sup> For example, the region boasts rich biodiversity but is also highly prone to natural disasters and the impact of climate change. Socially, the region shares a high incidence of gender-based violence and also a growing incidence of crime and security, including cross-border crime. High rates of noncommunicable diseases and high rates of youth unemployment are generally common issues that could undermine the region's capacity to realize its full development potential.

<sup>58</sup> The most recent UN-CARICOM high-level meeting (10th) took place in July 2019.

<sup>59</sup> The following are examples of cooperation between UN agencies and CARICOM. WHO/PAHO has facilitated CARICOM's participation in the negotiations on the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and the CARICOM Community Heads of Government Breakfast Event on NCDs where "Caribbean Moves" was launched. UNFPA and WHO/PAHO have organized a regional meeting with key UN partners, OECS, CARICOM and a representative of the Youth Ambassadors, to review the implementation status of the CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and to strengthen coordination between UN agencies and the network of International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliates toward achieved the targets of the ISF. UNOPS has cooperated with CARICOM on the sustainable management of marine resources.

2. The relationship with CARICOM is not based on a joint strategy or work plan. There are no specific commitments made by both sides that are tracked and monitored at the regional over time. Hence, there is no consistent follow up on the UN-CARICOM engagement.
3. At the practical level, engagement with CARICOM has taken place more at the agency level, with individual UN agencies engaging with CARICOM on specific projects related to specific countries. This has certainly been useful for both the respective agency and CARICOM, but it has not contributed to the spirit of the “One UN Approach” and neither has it improved efficiencies within the UN family.
4. CARICOM has several regional technical bodies, some of which are listed below, that possess significant knowledge and capabilities that reside outside the Secretariat. The UN could tap more effectively as a whole into the capabilities of these bodies by establishing channels of communication.
  1. Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)
  2. Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) – Covid
  3. Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)
  4. Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)
  5. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)
  6. Caribbean Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE)

The same situation described above applies to the OECS and other regional bodies. Participants in this evaluation think that there is definitely a need for a more structured relationship between the UN and regional bodies, especially CARICOM. The following are some suggestions derived from these consultations.

1. The UN should initiate a process for structuring its engagement with regional bodies – in particular CARICOM – more effectively. First, this engagement should be placed on more strategic grounds by developing a joint vision in terms of what is expected of the relationship and where it is heading (objectives and targets). Second, the joint vision should be translated into clear and practical work plans complete with activities and roles and responsibilities. Third, the UN should follow up on its commitments and track the achievement of objectives on a consistent basis using a monitoring system at the regional level that could be operated by one of the UN coordination structures.
2. The UN should engage CARICOM more effectively at the technical level. This is something some of the agencies are already doing on a bilateral basis. The UN should build well-structured bridges to the technical level in the Secretariat that will allow the two organizations to communicate on technical issues on a regular and predictable basis. The UN should also build stronger bridges to the specialized technical bodies under CARICOM. The agencies that already have cooperation channels with these bodies should help build these joint UN structures.

3. Given that both the UN and CARICOM are in the process of preparing their new strategic frameworks throughout 2021,<sup>60</sup> there is a window of opportunity for embedding certain key elements of cooperation on a more strategic ground.
4. There is also an opportunity for greater cooperation with CARICOM on the SDGs, given CARICOM's previous work on the development of an SDG framework for the region. The complementarities in this area are significant and extent to the work that both organizations do on improving the statistical base of the countries/territories in the region.
5. The UN should broaden its annual consultations to engage more actively with additional regional bodies such as the Caribbean Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, etc.

#### 6. Cooperation with Development Partners

The same argument about the importance of regional cooperation can be extended to UN's partnerships with development partners engaged in supporting the region's development process. The limited availability of agency core funds for the region amplifies the importance of partnerships with development partners.

The prevailing view among stakeholders participating in this evaluation is that development coordination at the regional and country/sub-regional level is generally inadequate. Stakeholders pointed out the lack of coordinating structures, both by the government and within the development partners community. The region lacks a well-established donor coordination body at the regional level – this function is partially played by the UN's Annual Regional Coordination Meeting which, among other participants, involves development partners. At the country/sub-regional level, the overall impression that the responses of UN agencies convey is that of confusion and disarray. The UN has intervened in certain cases to facilitate donor coordination. Certain UN RCs/RCOs have in some cases played a leading role in organizing coordination meetings. Also, UN agencies have tried to complement the role of governments in certain sectors by holding coordinating events in the areas where they have the greatest involvement. The overall picture painted by the RCOs at the country/sub-regional level is mixed and is summarized in the box below.

#### Box 8: Coordination of Development Partners<sup>61</sup>

The following is an overview of the situation regarding the coordination of development partners in the six MSDF jurisdictions.

1. **Barbados** – The Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group (ECDPG) is a group of donors and development organizations in Barbados and the OECS whose objective is to strengthen development coordination and strategic cooperation in Barbados and the eastern Caribbean countries. The ECDPG was established to provide a forum for information sharing among donors and development partners, and to make strategic decisions regarding programme development and coordination. The ECDPG is chaired by the UN RC and consists of over more than 12 donor and development partners serving Barbados and the OECS. Aligned to the UN's Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) 2017-2021, four subgroups:

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<sup>60</sup> CARICOM's latest Strategic Plan ended in 2019 and the process for the development of the 2021-2025 plan is underway.

<sup>61</sup> This summary is based on feedback provided by the six RCOs.

Healthy Caribbean, Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean, Safe, Cohesive and Just Caribbean, and Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean have been established to operationalize strategic engagements and programme initiatives around specific areas such as citizen security, data measurement tools, etc.

2. **Belize** – The RCO, on an ad-hoc basis, engages with development partners – bilateral and IFIs, for knowledge sharing and information exchange. There is no formal donor coordination mechanism led by the government. In 2019, the RCO led the initiation of Development Partners Coordination Forum in Belize with support from a leading core group of partners (EU, UK, Mexico, US, IADB, UN), as well as the Ministry of Economic Development. The group agreed to undertake a mapping of partner programme contributions (technical and financial) and this exercise was supported and consolidated by the RCO, with the objective to enhance knowledge sharing and partnership between the development partner agencies. It was envisioned that this effort would have been advanced in 2020.
3. **Guyana** – A Development Partners Group (DPG) has been established. The UN RC has convened regular development partners group meetings with rotating partners on various themes of common interest: public financial management (EU), energy sector (IDB), development partnerships (India), infrastructure (China), response to Venezuelan influx (UNHCR/IOM), gender-based violence (EU). The UN RC and UNDP engaged in consultations with international partners on electoral assistance.
4. **Jamaica** – The UN RC participates in a monthly forum organized/chaired by the major donor representatives in the country (GAC/FCO/USAID/WB/EU), as well as ad hoc international development partner (IDP) meetings convened by the government. There is currently no strong leadership from the government in coordinating development efforts, either with the UN and/or with IDPs. Agencies deal with their respective line ministry partners based on pre-established relationships relevant to their specific portfolios. While the country has an established Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), this body is understaffed and overburdened, resulting in significant obstacles in engaging them in any planning/implementation/review processes.
5. **Suriname** – The UNCT engages in monthly donor coordination meetings with non-UN development partners.
6. **Trinidad and Tobago** – A quarterly development partners coordination meeting is hosted by the RC and allows for donor coordination.

Despite the limitations with the existing donor coordination mechanisms, the UN has opportunities for a much more significant role in this area. First, the UN system can play a major role, alongside other regional bodies like CARICOM, in strengthening donor coordination at the regional level. As has been noted above, the UN should broaden its annual consultations to engage more actively with additional regional bodies such as the Caribbean Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, etc. At



the country/sub-regional level the UN can play a more active role in supporting the coordination capabilities of the respective government. Without sidelining the role of governments, the UNCTs can also play a greater coordination role in thematic areas where agencies are involved. As noted already, there is also an opportunity for working more closely with CARICOM on integrating the Caribbean regional integration agenda and the SDGs.

## 4.4. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a flexible concept that may be assessed in various ways. The agencies engaged in this evaluation think that some of the changes they have introduced in partnership with their national counterparts have been sustained, particularly those supported by legislative acts. At inception workshops, initial buy-in has been sought from beneficiaries where they were involved in the development of work plans and implementation of activities. The collaborative approach has been maintained throughout most projects and has promoted sustainability. Some agencies reported preparing exit strategies at the end of their projects in close consultation with national counterparts to ensure that there is continuity for the actions started under the project. Overall, many of the achievements that reviewed in the “Main Contributions” section of this report have been sustained over time.

However, there are several aspects of sustainability that require greater attention from the UN system as a whole. In the rest of this section, the focus will be on the following factors of sustainability: i) sustainability of programme funding; ii) expertise and knowledge management; iii) transformational change; and, iv) institutional stability.

### 4.4.1. Sustainability of Funding

The limited availability and sustainability of development finance in the region emerged as one of the main challenges identified by UN agencies. Given the middle to high-income status of the MSDF countries, the region has been experiencing a decline in donor interest.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, core funding from the UN agencies has remained very limited. More than 80% of the respondents to the survey with UN staff indicated “core” and “donor” funding as the main sources of funding for the activities of their agencies. Some agencies operate entirely on donor-based funding for the programming.<sup>63</sup>

An array of challenges were identified by the agencies in the course of this evaluation, some of which are highlighted below:

1. Covid-19 has impacted available funding not only in absolute terms, due to increasing budget deficits and public debt around the world, but also as a result of a reorientation of priorities towards the health sector.
2. Agencies like PAHO/WHO stated that Member States Assessed Contributions have greatly diminished.
3. Representatives of UN agencies engaged in this evaluation consider the private sector in the region weak and unable to provide major contributions to social or environmental causes, thus not representing significant potential as a source of funding for the UN programme.

This precarious financing situation has major implications for the sustainability of UN’s work in the region. Agencies seem to be competing for limited resources at the country or the regional level and are not working as “One UN”. Government cost-sharing does not seem to be an option, given the budgetary constraints that the governments in the region are facing.

Despite these challenges, there are some opportunities and good examples related to financing. Some initial attempts were made at the beginning of the MSDF cycle to engage with the EU on a more structured basis, but those efforts were not maintained after the reform process. Some agencies have been able to access quality and predictable funding, such as the Global Funding Compact, Peace

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<sup>62</sup> World Bank economic categorizations have made access to funding difficult in some Caribbean countries/territories.

<sup>63</sup> For example, the IOM is completely projectized in the way it is financed.

Building, SDG Fund, and Spotlight. ECLAC has developed a Caribbean Resilience Fund (global resources for supporting critical regional goods). In Guyana, in a bid to mobilize resources, the Department of Environment has been engaged in dialogue with the private sector to fund the activities of the department, in particular the maintenance of the Environmental Information Management System. At the same time, the UNCT has worked to submit two joint concept notes to the Joint SDG Fund.

In the future, the UN system in the region needs to expand its financial capacity to respond to the demands of national partners for support and expertise. UN staff surveyed for this evaluation think that vertical Funds (i.e. GEF, Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, etc.) and pooled funding are two sources of funding that should be explored more effectively in the new MSDF cycle. Also, private sector financing was identified by respondents as an opportunity that should be further pursued.

However, resource mobilization in the region and the respective countries/territories should be placed on a sounder and more strategic footing.

1. For a start, resource mobilization measures should be identified and agreed in a cohesive Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy at the regional level. Country/territory-level resource mobilization strategies should be sub-sets of this umbrella strategy.
2. RCOs already have more capacity in the area of development finance. They should deploy these capabilities – including the position of the economist – more effectively towards a well-coordinated resource mobilization effort at the regional and country/territory level, using the resource mobilization strategies mentioned above as the roadmaps for the process.
3. The UN should aim to tap into mechanisms available for large financing, including the vertical funds and green funds related to climate change, such as the Green Climate Fund. This as well will require a well-thought-out and strategic approach and all priorities and actions should be embedded in resource mobilization plan.
4. UN should enhance cooperation with CARICOM, jointly aiming for increased usage of regionally available resources.
5. The UN should also explore in a systematic and well-coordinated fashion opportunities for government co-financing and partnerships with IFIs. This effort should be coordinated by the RCOs and embedded in the resource mobilization plan.
6. The UN should also explore more systematically partnerships with the private sector. Different models and incentives that have worked elsewhere could be explored for this.

#### 4.4.2. Expertise and Knowledge Management

Perhaps the most unique feature of the MSDF is the level of aggregation it brings to the work of the UN not only in terms of bringing the UN agencies together under a single programming framework, but also doing so at a regional level that transcends national borders. As such, the MSDF represents for the UN an opportunity to facilitate the transfer of expertise and knowledge residing not only within the UN system, but also outside of it, and bringing it to bear on the development challenges and SDGs prioritized by the respective countries/territories.

The previous sections of this report have highlighted the wide variety of areas and sectors in which UN agencies and their counterparts have been engaged in the current MSDF cycle. All this work has led to the creation and amassment of a huge body of knowledge and expertise. This is actually by far the greatest asset that UN agencies possess. However, due to the fragmented nature of delivery of the agencies, this knowledge and expertise remains scattered across territorial and agency boundaries and is not deployed efficiently and rapidly across agency and country/territory boundaries. Apart from the

joint programming reviewed in previous sections of this report and the joint meetings organized at the country/sub-regional level, there is limited exchange of technical expertise and knowledge under the MSDF. There is no actual platform or any structured approach for how this exchange should take place in the context of the MSDF. In fact, the MSDF document had envisaged the creation of a platform for facilitating such exchanges, but so far it has not materialized. This represents a huge missed opportunity.

The UN system should be a lot more effective in how it manages the available expertise and knowledge, especially in a regional setting like this one. This evaluation recommends the establishment of a regional platform that enables the UN system to be more efficient in locating, generating, transmitting, and delivering the knowledge and expertise required to meet the development needs of national partners. The UN should establish a seamless infrastructure at the regional level that allows for information, knowledge, expertise, etc., to flow more freely within and between UNCTs. This will require investments in both the institutional infrastructure, as well as ICT infrastructure. The establishment of this infrastructure should be embedded in a broader strategy aimed at improving UN's position in the region as a knowledge organization.

#### 4.4.3. Transformational Change

Transformational change by definition entails sustainable change – a process that is irreversible because it has been engrained in social institutions and societal behaviour. In the context of UN's work in the Caribbean, two aspects of sustainability related to change that is transformational in nature have emerged in the course of this evaluation. One is the scaling up and institutionalization of initiatives piloted by the UN agencies. The other is the implementation of the various policy initiatives promoted by the agencies. Both topics are taken up in this section.

##### Piloting, Scaling up and Institutionalization

Several activities reported by the UN agencies under the MSDF have involved innovations and pilots. UN programmes after all are supposed to be catalytic; the idea is that governments are supposed to commit resources for their scaling up when the piloting is over. The basic assumption behind pilots is that successful initiatives will be replicated, scaled up and institutionalized. The idea is that UN agencies are not in the business of themselves solving problems, but helping national counterparts identify feasible solutions to development challenges. In their reporting, the agencies have outlined cases of pilots that have become institutionalized as part of formal government structures funded through the state budget, thus ensuring their sustainability in the long-run. One very recent example provided by the agencies is UN's support to the Covid-19 response which has been integrated into the national policy framework.

However, there are also projects which do not get replicated and scaled up. As one agency put it, *“frequently an initiative collapses once UN funding ends”*. Sometimes pilots do not get fully integrated into national structures, which can cater to them sustainably. Often, no care is taken to ensure that pilots get scaled up or replicated and that their effects do not remain limited in scale and scope. Crucial for the scaling up of pilots is that their design include a clear plan for what is expected from the pilot initiative and how they are expected to be replicated.<sup>64</sup> Another challenge is that information about pilots and replication is not easily available. More information on this will be useful not only for the UN, but also for national partners and donors.

To address the challenge of sustainability, the UN should track the performance of pilots over time – the lessons they generate during the piloting stage and the extent to which they get replicated and scaled

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<sup>64</sup> The plan should answer key questions such as: Under what timeframes? What resources will be required for the replication and scaling up? There is also a need for longer term planning and scenario building exercises that may not necessarily cover the period of one programme cycle.

up. As part of the monitoring system, the UN should seek to track pilot initiatives over time and after a pilot's lifetime. The UN should document more effectively results, lessons, experiences, and good practices and share them more widely. RCOs should coordinate more closely the approaches taken by the agencies on piloting. They should also play a more active role in the tracking of these pilot initiatives across agencies over time.

### Policy Implementation

UN's work under the MSDF has led to the development of many policies in a range of sectors. A part of this body of work was outlined in the section on the main contributions of UN agencies. Embedding changes in formal policies or laws is important for sustainability because they create obligations for the government and society. However, having a law or policy is often not enough. What ultimately matters is getting those laws and policies implemented effectively. This is a serious challenge that many countries face, and which was brought up in interviews for this evaluation. While many laws and policies are already in place – and some of them of good quality – not everything gets fully implemented. Lack of implementation is a great challenge for the sustainability of UN's work.

Effective implementation requires that public organizations possess capabilities (financial, human, administrative, political, etc.) to implement. Implementation necessitates actions plans that spell out specific actions to be undertaken to ensure implementation. Implementation also requires funds to carry out the required activities. Actions have to be linked to specific budget allocations from the public budget. Thus, policy making needs to be linked to the public financial management system. This requires engagement with budgeting processes and ministries of finance.

To address this challenge more effectively, the UN should take a more systematic approach to policy-making by paying particular attention to the issue of implementation. Policy development should be clearly linked to public budgets. The UN should also strengthen the systems that track implementation results, rather than inputs/outputs and assess more rigorously the sustainability of achievements. The UN should support the implementation capabilities of the governments and not act as a substitute for governments' shortcomings in implementation.

#### 4.4.4. Institutional Memory

Several agencies interviewed for this evaluation brought up the challenge of frequent changes in government priorities due to political rotation after elections. These changes cause frequent turnover of staff and focal points in key government institutions responsible for the joint implementation of UN programming. The ultimate result of this is limited government ownership, which is manifested in weak engagement, slow decision-making, poor institutional memory, etc. This situation has affected severely the UN programme in a couple of jurisdictions in the region. The challenge that this situation presents for the UN was also revealed during focus group discussions for this evaluation where several government participants displayed a lack of knowledge and information about the MSDF.

This situation is further aggravated by the lack of a well-organized system of documentation and communication/dissemination of information to stakeholders within the UN system, which seems to be a systemic problem across the region. Basic information, including minutes/protocols from key meetings at the regional or country/sub-regional level, was not available or not easily recoverable. It is unlikely that detailed documentation is available on country/territory-level activities by individual agencies and that this information is easily available to other agencies. There does not seem to have been a proper handover of information during the transition that ensued from the reform agenda. No repository of information at the regional level has been designated and no rules and procedures have been developed for how information is stored and retrieved. Overall, the UN does not have an effective system in place for storing this kind of information and documentation and retrieving it quickly and efficiently when needed. In this area, there is a need for a systematic approach for how information is

recorded, stored, managed and retrieved. The UN should establish an electronic system (linked to UN-Info or somewhere else) that enabled staff members to easily store and access information. Also, the UN should promote a culture of documentation, whereby all major meetings and processes are recorded with the aim of strengthening institutional memory in a situation where there is high turnover of key positions.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The MSDF has been a pioneering initiative in that represents a regional programme for the whole of the UN family. As a regional framework, it was envisaged to be an innovative response to the needs of the region for greater integration. But it has also been idiosyncratic, in the way it has responded to the unique character of each country and territory that it has encompassed. It is this specific nature of the MSDF, in adjusting to the circumstances of the region, that has presented the respective stakeholders with the challenges described throughout this report.

1. First of all, the MSDF has encompassed a multi-country setting, resembling the UN multi-country office (MCO) model which itself is a pioneering UN approach for effective and tailored programme delivery. However, the MSDF is larger than an MCO, comprising three out of all eight MCOs established globally. Such an arrangement makes the MSDF one of the most complex organizational structures in the UN family. This should serve as a reminder to us that ensuring appropriate coordination and cooperation under such an extensive framework requires significant efforts and resources. Until the recent beefing up of the six RCOs, these resources and efforts have not been there.
2. Another factor of complexity for the MSDF has been the large number of UN agency mandates it has encompassed across the region. These agencies have come with their overlapping, cross-cutting, seesawing and overarching programmes, some of which residential and others non-residential, some regional, some sub-regional and others country-specific, with regional offices located all over the continent and in a wild variety of geographical coverage patterns. On top of this complexity, the agencies have come with limited core financial resources, a perfect set up for competition for scarce and declining donor resources due to the region's transition to a high-income status. Coordination in these conditions is definitely not an easy task.
3. The MSDF was envisaged to contribute to the Caribbean's regional integration process, represented by initiatives such as CARICOM. This has proven to be an inherently difficult balancing act, given the need to cater to national priorities, while preserving cohesion at the regional level. As many participants in this evaluation have noted, the integration process has not been linear; sometimes encountering bottlenecks and delays. As such, it could not have progressed without consequences for the implementation of the MSDF. Many challenges described in the pages of this report are also a reflection of the challenges of the integration process, most of which are largely out of the control of the UN stakeholders, especially those on the ground.
4. Furthermore, the introduction of the MSDF approach in the region has coincided with the initiation of the UN reform agenda. The reform started halfway into the implementation of the MSDF and the changes that it involved – not only in structure, but also in leadership and staffing – have introduced an extra degree of complexity. The MSDF was not originally conceived and designed to withstand shocks emanating from such a crucial reform of the system. Therefore, as some participants in this evaluation pointed out, there has been a “before and after” period in this cycle of the MSDF which corresponds to the point when the UNRCO institution was delinked from UNDP. Some of the processes that had started before the reform were not maintained, also partly as a result of weak documentation systems resulting in poor institutional memory.

Understood from the perspective of this complexity, many challenges that the MSDF has faced should be appreciated for what they are – structural barriers originating from outside of the MSDF which people inside have had to grapple with. While the contributions of the individual agencies are tangible and appreciated by the national stakeholders participating in this evaluation, they remain for the most part isolated efforts within the confines of agency mandates and programmes. Yet, greater inter-agency cooperation is not only desirable by virtue of efficiency gains. It is a corollary and imperative of the world we are living in. The global Covid-19 crisis has thrust into the limelight the importance of regional and global cooperation. Many participants to this evaluation noted what has now become a worldwide mantra – “*No country is safe until every country is safe*”. The pandemic has reinforced a stronger sense of awareness for what goes on the other side of the border. Therefore, it is quite possible that the post-pandemic world will demand ever greater coordination at the regional and global level.

Another challenge going forward will be in forging a greater sense of common identity and culture among the agencies, in spite of the structural barriers highlighted above. To achieve this, two sets of responsibilities within the UN family should be exercised with greater vigour, confidence, commitment and accountability. First, the six RCOs – having now been beefed up and possessing reasonable capabilities – need to step up to the challenge of coordinating the bewildering variety of agency mandates and programmes across country and territory boundaries. At the same time, the agencies – whether residential or non-residential – need to reciprocate by opening up to cooperation, collaboration, joint work, information sharing, etc. – in other words, mustering up the commitment to engage with each other in good faith. After all, cooperation does not mean “*surrendering sovereignty*” and definitely is not a “*zero-sum game*”. Cooperation, first of all, is a *mindset*. Delivering on these responsibilities requires strong and clear-headed leadership, at all levels – headquarters, regional and country-level – as well as a good plan that identifies in unambiguous terms actions and responsibilities for both RCOs and agencies. The recommendations provided in the following section of this report are crafted to help UN managers, be they in the RCOs or the agencies, to jointly identify those actions and responsibilities through a healthy debate.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence and analysis presented throughout this report, this evaluation provides the following recommendations for the consideration of the UN agencies and their counterparts (governmental and non-governmental).

### RECOMMENDATION 1

#### *Design of New MSDF*

A number of recommendations derived from this evaluation are related to the design of the upcoming UN programme framework and the monitoring of progress through the effective use of data and evidence.

5. In case there will be quick progress with the adoption of a regional SDG framework, the UN should ground the upcoming programme results framework in the regional SDG framework.
6. To make the RRF more practical and user-friendly, in the upcoming framework the number of indicators should be reduced, and the focus should be on those that are most meaningful and more directly related to the work of the UN. Also, care should be undertaken to have a results framework that is underpinned by a stronger logic of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also by other relevant demographics (given the significant focus of the programme of specific social groups).
7. In the process of developing the new cooperation framework, the stakeholders could consider the development of a Theory of Change that connects the different pieces of work that the agencies carry out into a unified and cohesive framework. A UN-level theory of change could help the agencies to identify in clearer terms opportunities for collaboration, mechanisms of cooperation, and channels through which expected change will take place at the level of policies, institutions, communities and individuals.
8. The UN should also establish a more comprehensive monitoring system at the regional level, under the coordination of the RCOs. The monitoring system should encompass not only results, but also performance indicators such as the ones discussed in this report. This should include monitoring mechanisms to track overall expenditure, progress with the piloting process over time, status of adoption and implementation of policy instruments, awareness-raising and information campaigns, etc. The agencies should cooperate by providing the necessary information to the respective RCOs and assisting with the analysis.
9. The UN should also evaluate the results and impact of its work more frequently and in a more cohesive way – for example, through joint outcome evaluations focused on one sector or cross-agency programme or even evaluations like this one which encompass the totality of UN interventions.
10. Going forward, UN activities should also strengthen its work in support of data collection, analysis and use by partners at the national and sub-national levels and fostering a culture of evidence use in policy-making. The UN should work with national partners to strengthen the demand for data and its use in strengthening accountability in the public sector. Such focus will not only ensure better targeting of interventions to the most vulnerable and better monitoring

of the results of UN's work, but will also contribute to improving the country's situation on data availability and analysis.

11. It will be important that the new programme document define with greater clarity some of the concepts and provide sufficient practical guidance for their implementation.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

### ***Results-based Management***

12. The UN system should strengthen its data infrastructure, including the coordination and data aggregation mechanisms across the region, the structure and operability of the UN-Info system, the definition of indicators, baselines, targets, etc. Significant training will be required for this, which ideally should be conducted jointly for the agencies and organized/coordinated by the respective RCOs.
13. There is also need for greater support by the UN for data collection and analysis capabilities in the region. The focus on this support should be not only on the technical capacities of the data-related agencies, but also on the effective coordination of those responsible for the production of data and those responsible for the analysis and dissemination of statistics. Harmonization of data across national boundaries should be an important objective driving the work of the UN and its partners. Also, attention should be paid to the issue of disaggregation – not only by gender, but also other dimensions that are crucial to effective policymaking. Progress in this area will depend on the political will of governments to implement the legal changes that will lay the foundations for a proper functioning of national statistical systems and on the efforts of regional bodies and national statistical offices. The UN should encourage this process through its advocacy and norm-setting activities.
14. Given that CARICOM has a particular interest in the development of statistical capabilities in the region, and has even come up with a strategy for this objective, it will be important for the UN system to coordinate efforts with the CARICOM Secretariat on this matter so that all efforts by the two systems are complementary and synergetic. This work should also be closely coordinated with UNDESA and UNECLAC, UN organizations that have been particularly involved in the development of national SDGs in the respective countries/territories.
15. All UN's statistics-related activities and support should take place in the context of a data ecosystem at the regional level grounded on a master plan for statistical development. This is an approach that the UN is well-positioned to promote with the respective governments. Given the weakness of statistical capabilities in the region, this is something that the UN could consider for the upcoming MSDF. The UN has also an opportunity to support the development of a mechanism that strengthens coordination between the regional data ecosystem and established international statistical systems.
16. As a first step, the UN system should strengthen its own coordination structures around the SDGs. A system should be put in place that will enable the UN in the region to keep track of the situation and activities related to the SDGs. This system should be underpinned by a permanent SDG group that meets regularly to review the situation and share information. SDG-related support by the agencies should be coordinated more effectively.

17. RMETT's active role in coordinating M&E activities under the MSDF should be maintained and further strengthened in the new programme cycle. This group should be firmly institutionalized and supported with training and other resources. An effective M&E system should also be accompanied by a costed M&E work plan grounded in the results framework of the new MSDF. This plan should be supported with the necessary financial resources. RMETT should be responsible for actions under this plan, including periodic assessments.
18. The UN system should work more closely with CARICOM in supporting the establishment of an effective system for monitoring progress on SDGs at the regional level (including the development of an SDG database). The UN system, in partnership with CARICOM, can address the need for institutional and technical capacity to produce the necessary statistics to establish and monitor the SDGs. This could include a regional SDG target setting workshop with regional agencies which will provide a common target setting methodology and will foster greater data and M&E synergies with their strategic plans. Further, the establishment of the online M&E portal for SDG reporting at the regional level could be an initiative that the UN and CARICOM could support jointly.
19. UNCTs at the country/sub-regional level should coordinate more effectively their support for national partners on SDG-related matters. An assessment of the gaps and opportunities across the region would be a first good step. It might also be useful for the UN to organize a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) mission to identify key sectors for acceleration of SDG implementation in the region and in individual countries/territories. The UN could be instrumental in providing training support for relevant national authorities.
20. The MSDF should be underpinned by a clear plan for evaluations, assessments, randomized control trials, etc., based on prior agreements and discussions led by the RCOs with the involvement of the agencies. Going forward, the agencies should evaluate the results and impact of their work regularly and in a more coherent way, including through joint outcome evaluations targeting an entire sector or even the totality of UN activities, as is the case with this evaluation. The evaluative work undertaken by the agencies should be utilized more effectively and strategically at the country and regional level by the respective UNCTs.
21. The UN should coordinate the reporting tools and products used by the agencies, a process which should be facilitated more effectively by the respective RCOs.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

#### ***Strengthening Inter-agency Cooperation***

With the RCOs now invigorated and with more resources available, there should be a coordinated and concentrated effort between the UN and the respective government to establish strong foundations for a permanent and efficient functioning of these coordination structures.

22. At the regional level, the UN should consider strengthening the effectiveness of the RSC and RCM, and where feasible improving the participation of national partners and the quality of the inputs that are discussed and the outputs resulting from these meetings. The UN needs to establish a procedure for how these bodies accept the input of non-members and how they keep

them informed. The VPNs and RTTs will require significant attention the UN leadership in the region. Given the acceleration of digitalization and virtual meetings due to Covid-19, the VPNs should become a much more effective platform for the exchange of information, expertise and knowledge across the region. The right incentives should be created for the engagement of not only UN staff in them, but also government and non-government counterparts.

23. At the country/sub-regional level, the UN should strengthen inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, especially the JNSC and Results Groups, which are crucial not only for coordination among the agencies, but also for coordination with key government counterparts. The following are some potential measures to be considered.
  1. JNSCs and Results Groups should be fully established and institutionalized in all countries. The upcoming MSDF cycle represents a good opportunity to reset the process. The frequency of result group meetings should be clearly determined and maintained throughout the cycle. Results Groups meetings should also become more effectively institutionalized by strengthening the tracking of their decisions and the reporting of their results (including quality meeting minutes).
  2. UN agencies should commit to attending more effectively results group meetings. This is not only part of the “Delivering as One” to which they have committed in principle, but also carries practical benefits for them. The management of agencies should create incentives for staff members to attend these meetings regularly.
  3. UNCTs in each country/territory should identify incentives that will make result groups more attractive to government staff, despite the opportunity cost that they entail for them. These incentives should be established on a country-by-country (territory-by-territory) basis, in line with the specifics of the context.
24. There is also a need to streamline the multitude of inter-agency groups that exist in the different jurisdictions. As a first step, it will be useful for the UN team to conduct a review of all the existing inter-agency coordination bodies to fully map existing structures. Based on such assessment, the UN can then decide how best to rationalize and streamline these groups, as well as introduce some uniformity in how they function. There might also be opportunities for building regional bridges that link similar groups across countries/territories.
25. With regards to the operations of the agencies’ regional offices, the UN should as a first step conduct a systematic assessment and mapping of what these centers do and what geographical areas they cover. Based on this assessment, the UN should identify options for rationalization in the work of these centers and, in particular, potential for stronger synergies and cooperation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

##### ***Planning***

26. The UN should promote a higher level of awareness among agency staff about the UN reform agenda and its implications on the ground, and in that context the relationship between the MSDF and CIPs. This matter will require training which may be organized by the RCOs.
27. The UN should organize better communication among agencies on planning matters. RCOs should keep the flow of information going with regards to planning processes at the country/sub-regional level. The RCOs should track the planning processes of the agencies and have a clear picture of the involved timelines. Based on this tracking, the RCOs should establish a simple and practical planning system (using standard online tools combined with UN-Info) and provide regular updates to the agencies.
28. RCOs should also ensure that the agency planning process is coordinated with the CIP process through regular meetings with the agencies dedicated to the planning process. The RCO could also facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at the sectoral and national level.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

### *Joint Implementation*

#### Joint Programming

29. In partnership with the Government, UNCT should identify and institutionalize incentives for the agencies to engage in joint programmes, considering the agencies' respective mandates and rules and procedures. While it is up to the partners to decide what would work best in the Caribbean context, potential options could be considered from the experience of other countries.

#### Communications

30. As a first step, the UN should develop a joint Communications Strategy at the regional level. The development of joint communications strategies should be replicated at the country/sub-regional level under the coordination of the respective RCOs. The regional RTT should become fully functional and meet regularly to coordinate practical communications aspects across the region. UNIC should ramp up its profile and serve as dynamic center for the spread of information and promotion of advocacy on key issues that fall within its mandate. There are also many opportunities for joint advocacy and awareness-raising activities by UN agencies under the coordination of UNRCOs targeting the awareness of partners and citizens of the

SDGs. Ultimately, the objective in this area should be for the UN agencies in the region to deliver to external audiences stronger one-voice messages on key issues.

### Gender Mainstreaming

31. Due to its cross-cutting and normative nature, the UN system should cooperate more effectively at the regional around gender mainstreaming, not only with regards to advocacy and awareness-raising, but also by supporting jointly the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation (i.e. gender-based violence), implementation of international commitments, economic empowerment and political participation of women, and a range of other topics like these. The UN system should aggregate agency efforts across territorial boundaries into a joint gender advocacy and communication strategy and work plan at the regional level adapted to the MSDF context. The agencies should also strengthen joint external communications on gender to ensure consistent messages and information and promote gender equality in external communications.

### Research and Analytical Products

32. Under the coordination of the RCOs, the UN system should establish processes and mechanisms for the coordination of these activities. At a minimum, the agencies should establish a system for sharing amongst themselves information on planned analytical exercises which will be of interest to other agencies. The regional coordination mechanisms could include a standardized tool for tracking this type of work. The RCOs should play a more active role in disseminating this information among the agencies across the region and in facilitating joint activities.

### Trainings

33. The UN should identify synergies in training activities, starting with joint assessments of training needs, joint delivery of training programmes, exchange of training content across agencies and countries/territories, etc. There are areas, like human rights-based approaches, results-based management, gender mainstreaming, environmental sustainability, etc., involving the same training principles, which makes standardized delivery across organizational or geographical boundaries effortless. Information about training plans by the various agencies should be collected at the regional level and disseminated with all the agencies through the coordination channels. RCOs should play a major role in coordinating this process and facilitating joint training programmes and capacity development activities, starting with their own.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

### ***Resource Mobilization***

34. The UN should develop a cohesive Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy at the regional level. Country/territory-level resource mobilization strategies should be sub-sets of this umbrella strategy.
35. RCOs already have more capacity in the area of development finance. They should deploy these capabilities – including the position of the economist – more effectively towards a well-coordinated resource mobilization effort at the regional and country/territory level, using the resource mobilization strategies mentioned above as the roadmaps for the process.
36. The UN should aim to tap into mechanisms available for large financing, including the vertical funds and green funds related to climate change, such as the Green Climate Fund. This as well will require a well-thought-out and strategic approach and all priorities and actions should be embedded in resource mobilization plan.
37. UN should enhance cooperation with CARICOM, jointly aiming for increased usage of regionally available resources.
38. The UN should also explore in a systematic and well-coordinated fashion opportunities for government co-financing and partnerships with IFIs. This effort should be coordinated by the RCOs and embedded in the resource mobilization plan.
39. The UN should also explore more systematically partnerships with the private sector. Different models and incentives that have worked elsewhere could be explored for this.
40. The UN system at a fundamental level should be able to report in full accountability on the amount of money it has mobilized and spent in the region as a whole. This will require a solid data entry and quality assurance process for the financial information that is captured in the UN-Info system. RCOs should monitor this process on a continuous basis and provide the necessary training to the UN agencies based on the challenges they identify in a practical manner.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

### ***Engagement of Civil Society and Private Sector***

41. The UN should engage civil society more effectively. Engagement should start at the planning stage, including the preparation of the MSDF. Furthermore, the engagement of civil society could be done in a more structured way, involving greater coordination among agencies. The

fora for the engagement of national stakeholders should be opened to civil society representatives. CSOs should be involved more actively in the monitoring of results. Reporting at the regional and country/sub-regional level should include civil society. The UN should also explore greater opportunities for community-based interventions and service delivery through CSOs. Lastly, it will important to have a more coherent approach at the UN level (across agencies and countries/territories) for how support to civil society, especially capacity building assistance, is designed and delivered.

42. The UN should step up its engagement with the private sector to ensure that private sector resources are deployed more effectively towards the solution of development problems. There is also potential for the agencies to tap into private financing through partnerships with private companies. The UN should take a more systematic and strategic approach at the regional and country/sub-regional level to engaging with the private sector.

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

### *Knowledge Management, Record Keeping and Culture of Documentation*

43. The UN system should be a lot more effective in how it manages the available expertise and knowledge, especially in a regional setting like this one. This evaluation recommends the establishment of a regional platform that enables the UN system to be more efficient in locating, generating, transmitting, and delivering the knowledge and expertise required to meet the development needs of national partners. The UN should establish a seamless infrastructure at the regional level that allows for information, knowledge, expertise, etc., to flow more freely within and between UNCTs. This will require investments in both the institutional infrastructure, as well as ICT infrastructure. The establishment of this infrastructure should be embedded in a broader strategy aimed at improving UN's position in the region as a knowledge organization.
44. The UN should pursue a systematic approach for how information is recorded, stored, managed and retrieved. The UN should establish an electronic system (linked to UN-Info or somewhere else) that enabled staff members to easily store and access information. Also, the UN should promote a culture of documentation, whereby all major meetings and processes are recorded with the aim of strengthening institutional memory in a situation where there is high turnover of key positions.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**



### *Scaling-up and Policy Implementation*

45. The UN should track the performance of pilots over time – the lessons they generate during the piloting stage and the extent to which they get replicated and scaled up. As part of the monitoring system, the UN should track pilot initiatives over time and after a pilot's lifetime. The UN should document more effectively results, lessons, experiences, and good practices and share them more widely. RCOs should coordinate more closely the approaches taken by the agencies on piloting. They should also play a more active role in the tracking of these pilot initiatives across agencies over time.
  
46. The UN should take a more systematic approach to policy-making by paying particular attention to the issue implementation. Policy development should be clearly linked to public budgets. The UN should also strengthen the systems that track implementation results, rather than inputs/outputs and assess more rigorously the sustainability of achievements. The UN should support the implementation capabilities of the governments and not act as a substitute for governments' shortcomings in implementation.