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Country-Level Aid Coordination at the United Nations – Taking the Resident Coordinator System Forward

Timo Mahn

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Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung / Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DaO	Delivering as One
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DG	Director-General
DIE	German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik
DO	Designated Officer
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office
DOCO	United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office
DPA	Department for Political Affairs
DPI	UN Secretariat – Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPTA	Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary-General

ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
ExCom	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HIC	High-Income Country
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
HLCP	High-Level Committee on Programme
HLP	High-Level Panel
IAAP	Inter-Agency Advisory Panel
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IO	International Organization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITC	International Trade Centre (UNCTAD)
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LIC	Low-Income Country
L-MIC	Lower-Middle-Income Country
MAS	Management and Accountability System
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Middle-Income Country

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRLLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries & Small Island Developing Countries
OSAA	Office of the Special Advisor on Africa
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
SA	Specialized Agencies
SG	Secretary-General
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SRSG-CAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SWC	System-Wide Coherence
TA	Technical Assistance
TCPR	Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review
ToR	Terms of Reference
U-MIC	Upper-Middle-Income Country
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	United Nations Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCCF	United Nations Country Coordination Fund
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team

UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children‘s Fund
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugee in the Near East
UNS	United Nations Secretariat
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
UNSSC	United Nations System Staff College
UNU	United Nations University
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	Under-Secretary-General
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

Introduction

The fragmentation of the United Nations (UN) development system requires aid coordination to bring about a more consistent whole. As the "lynchpin of coordination" at the country level, the system of Resident Coordinators (RCs) is a key driver of coherence for the operational activities of the UN for development.

With overall contributions totalling more than US$ 22 billion annually, the UN is one of the "big players" in development. Active across sectors and dealing with a multitude of development challenges, the UN member states have created a complex UN development system that consists of 37 different funds, programmes and agencies with operational activities at the country level. All of the UN entities have countless achievements to show for their development success, yet at the same time it has become a commonplace that the UN development system collectively "punches below its weight". Making the different components of the "UN puzzle" fit together is a substantial challenge for country-level aid coordination.

Currently, reforms are underway to make headway towards more coherence. Because of a political impasse among member states in reaching consensus about changes at the global level, a pragmatic shift of attention towards the country- and operational levels can be observed, with a particular focus on the RC system. Tasked with strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency and relevancy of the UN development system through coordinating assistance and activities of the UN entities in each of the 130 partner countries, the RC normally is the UN's highest-ranking official on the ground. In that sense, it is not surprising that a functioning RC system has been deemed key for the overall functioning of the UN system at the country level. Moreover, in a majority of countries, the RC also has a leadership role, together with partner governments, in coordinating all aid coming from the broader bilateral and multilateral donor community, giving it additional weight in the process.

Against this background, this study offers an in-depth examination and assessment of UN country-level aid coordination mechanisms revolving

around the RC system. It addresses the following question: How do the different entities of the UN that are operationally active in the field of development coordinate in order to ensure that their contribution is implemented in an efficient, effective and meaningful way? The analysis and conclusions contained in the study are based on a thorough review of existing official reports, documents, literature, primary survey data collected by the UN Secretariat as well as more than 30 expert interviews.

Theoretical perspectives on aid coordination

As part of donor harmonisation, aid coordination has been highlighted in the discourse about aid- and development effectiveness emanating from the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and subsequent fora. Albeit widely in use, it has remained a rather ambiguous concept, however, with its application varying among different actors. Partner-country ownership, as also codified within the OECD-DAC principles, presents the main frame of reference within the UN context. On this basis, the study introduces the concept of a continuum of potential aid-coordination models with the choice of model hinging on a number of external and internal factors, such as country context, coordination capacity, group composition and organisational setup. Crucially, it is important that coordination does not become an end in itself but rather a means towards an improved engagement. Selecting an optimal level of coordination that maximises gains in terms of reduced overlap and inconsistencies and minimises the costs of coordination on the side of the UN and partner governments, however, faces particular measurement challenges.

The case for UN aid coordination

The second chapter explores the case for aid coordination, pointing towards the historical evolution of its institutional context and the resulting state of affairs that is characterised by a polycentric and compartmentalised structure of the UN development system as major driving forces for the aid-coordination demand. As such, the history and evolution of the UN development system mirrors the global trend of entity proliferation and increasing fragmentation of their activities. Without an overarching

command structure to bring about coherence, individual UN funds, programmes and agencies are only loosely coupled together, which has resulted in coordination becoming the dominant model of structuring UN entity relationships. By building on the system of specialised agencies that existed at the time of the UN's foundation, and expanding the development system further in an iterative fashion over time, UN member states have created an internal logic and structure that is not per se directed towards coherence. Paradoxically, difficulties in overhauling existing structures have become a driving force for the creation of new ones, which result in further complexity. The longstanding response to the growing complexity within the UN development system has been a matching drive towards strengthened coordination.

The quest for systemic funding

Member-state funding practices have repeatedly been identified as a key factor in sustaining fragmentation of the UN development system. Recent years have seen a growing trend in earmarked contributions designed to make the UN more pliable for bilateral interests and priorities, but the decentralised approach to resource mobilisation has at the same time stipulated substantial competition between individual UN agencies to the extent where incoherencies and overlap within the UN development system can often be traced back to incoherent funding practices by major donors. In that sense, the need for aid coordination continues to be closely linked to donor funding practices.

Organisational setup of UN aid coordination

How is UN aid coordination organised? Chapter 3 presents the institutional framework for UN aid coordination along the four dimensions of (a) governance, (b and c) global and country-level organisational setup, as well as (d) management. The analysis is based upon the assumption that the institutional setup that sets the boundaries for aid coordination has a significant effect on the functioning of these processes, and, ultimately, its outcomes.

Governing UN aid coordination

The governance dimension of UN aid coordination refers to the intergovernmental realm serviced by diplomatic missions of the UN member states tasked with providing overall policy guidance to the UN development system in general, and the interagency coordination machinery in particular. This realm is differentiated from interagency processes serviced by the representatives of the different agencies, funds and programmes aimed at coordinating their activities. Among the UN's principal organs, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) principally has the mandate to coordinate activities of the specialised agencies – and by extension also the funds and programmes that were established subsequent to the UN Charter's adoption – and relay respective recommendations to the General Assembly. The fact that this mandate is, however, spelt out in relatively weak terms has become a fundamental challenge for the governance of the UN development system. Vested with a weak mandate, and lacking decisive action by member states, ECOSOC has experienced a gradual shift of its powers to the General Assembly and the executive boards of the specialised agencies and the funds and programmes. As a result, the system-wide intergovernmental coordination and oversight function is largely considered defunct, which is aggravated by the fact that member states often send incoherent messages to the UN development system through different channels.

Organisational setup for UN aid coordination at global level

Shifting to the implementation sphere, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and in particular the UN Development Group (UNDG), constitute the main instruments for interagency coordination and support to the RC system at the global level. UNDG is an interlocution mechanism between member states and the UN development system, whereby the former relay high-level policy guidance through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process. Working at the level of agency headquarters, the global aid coordination machinery is organised in a horizontal fashion, that is, across the boundaries of individual entities. Since the majority of institutions, systems and pro-

cesses within the UN development system continue to be organised in a vertical manner under different executive boards, accountability lines are frequently at odds with a system-wide orientation, thus resulting in incompatibilities, ambiguities and clashes. The analysis identifies three broad sets of limitations to the effectiveness of UNDG in providing support to country-level aid coordination and the RC system:

- First, the focussed purpose of the former "executive" UNDG in harmonising and simplifying operations has been diluted through a substantial enlargement of the group;
- Second, there are various limitations arising from UNDG's membership composition not being aligned with the CEB and UN development system overall, which causes friction in cases where entities are affected by UNDG decisions, despite not having been represented;
- Third, UNDG's voluntary and consensus-based decision-making processes frequently result in agreement at the level of least-common denominator only, thereby constraining the effectiveness of its operational guidance for country-level coordination and the RC system.

In summary, global aid-coordination structures appear complex and their capacity for forging compromise limited.

Organisational setup for UN aid coordination at the country level

It is on country-level aid coordination that expectations for substantial change seem to be focussed on the most. To an extent, this level's organisational setup mirrors global structures. The functioning of the RC system, which member states established to be "owned by the UN development system as a whole" and to function in a "participatory, collegial and accountable" way, with its management being "firmly anchored in the UNDP", is strongly influenced by the relationship between RC and UNCT members. In particular, the latter principle is seen to be behind a contentious debate about the independence of the RC function, which essentially revolves around the question of whether RCs – in addition to their system-wide functions – also act as the Resident Representatives or the UNDP, or the other way around. Against this background, the study

identifies a number of challenges with the Management and Accountability System (MAS), which was introduced in 2008 to address this issue, and for the functioning of the RC system more broadly:

- The relationship between RC and UNCT members is not based upon a binding and committal agreement, which demotes it to an informal association that lacks specificity and institutionalisation. In particular, the RC is not provided with any formal authority over the members of the UNCT, nor any means to coordinate their programmes during the implementation phase.
- Incentive structures and accountability lines of the UNCT members continue to be unaligned with the RC system, implementation of agreed changes is lagging behind and the mutual responsibilities of RC and UNCT members under "collegial accountability" remain vague.
- Persistent role conflicts arise from the existing arrangements, which only notionally separate the RC function from those of UNDP, and they are exacerbated by a lack of external awareness of the separation of roles. The linkage of the RC system to UNDP as a major source of support for the RC system may also have been weakened as a result of the firewall.

In conclusion, both global- as well as country-level aid coordination frameworks are complex, involving ambiguous roles and responsibilities, and are based on diffused accountability systems. As a result, the high hopes placed upon country-level aid coordination can only partially be met within the existing institutional and organisational setup.

UNDP management of the RC system

The principle of the RC system being "firmly anchored within the UNDP" has been one of much controversy in the past, because the functioning of coordination crucially depends on how the coordinator's role is perceived by peers. As the analysis has shown, the relationship between RC and UNCT members is principally based on voluntary commitment with very little formal authority. It has been found that, by and large, RCs rely on personal leadership and reputation in cultivating allegiance

within and outside the UNCT. Against this background, it would be seen as necessary for RC management to be situated in a neutral position in order to be – and be seen to be – devoid of any conflicting interests. UNDP's ability to serve as manager of the RC system has repeatedly been called into question because of the existing long-running institutional tensions arising from its two-tiered mandate, in both system-wide coordination and agency-specific operations. Responding to mounting criticism, a "functional firewall" was introduced in 2008 in an effort to isolate the two quintessential functions. With full implementation still wanting, conclusions on the adequacy of the firewall are still pending. Based on the analysis of conceptual proposals and historical practice, the study outlines four principal options for the positioning of the RC management function:

- The "status-quo" option favours the full implementation of the functional firewall and other technical measures to delineate UNDP and RC functions, while preserving UNDP's operational role.
- In line with the High-Level Panel proposal of 2006, the "system-wide coherence" option favours a continued anchoring of the RC management within an operationally active UNDP, with its areas of activity reconfigured so as to avoid compromising the coordination role.
- A third option would see the management of the RC system anchored in the UN Secretariat.
- The independent institution option would call for the establishment of a new entity independent of the funds, programmes and agencies to manage the RC system.

Practice of country-level aid coordination through the RC

Chapter 4 analyses the "default model" of how the RC system functions on the basis of an appraisal of its historical legacy. Subsequent sections retrace the three dimensions of the RC system orientation: i) the internal, ii) the external and iii) the aid coordination with the partner country. The final section of the chapter reviews the current role and mandate of RCs at the country level.

Evolution of the RC system

Today's RC system is the product of a lengthy process of institutional evolution whose roots can be traced back to the early 1950s. Its development was never straightforward or linear, but rather incremental and adaptive in response to external and internal impulses. Understanding the origins of the RC system offers important insights into current debates. Taking key events in the RC system evolution as yardsticks, five phases are identified:

- 1950–1969 ("Laying the groundwork"): In 1950, a predecessor institution of the UNDP started the practice of dispatching field representatives aimed at giving partner countries a stronger voice in aid allocation. ECOSOC accorded these representatives a first coordination mandate in 1960, and their authority was further boosted through a centralised command over systemic funding.
- 1969–1977 ("Growing discontent with the UN development system"): In 1969 the "Capacity Study" of the UN development system resulted in a strengthening of the UNDP Resident Representative as "leader of the team". On the downside, the autonomy of the individual entities equally started to grow, and UNDP's own operational engagement meant its leadership role was no longer above reproach.
- 1977–1997 ("A period of stagnation"): 1977 marks the birth of the RC system as a principally independent function. While this improved the clarity of the coordination mandate, the subsequent double-hatting of the RC and UNDP Resident Representative functions resulted in its practical limitation.
- 1997–2006 ("A coming revival?"): The period saw a renewed interest in reform of the UN development system, including of its mechanisms for aid coordination, benefitting from a favourable political climate. A 1997 reform package eventually led to the introduction of the "firewall" between the functions of UNDP and the RC.
- 2006 – to date ("Delivering as One and rising expectations"): The call for an "empowered RC" to support the UN development system in "Delivering as One" (DaO) by the "High-Level Panel on system-wide coherence" in 2006 marks another key step in the RC system evolution, which led to the piloting of an amended DaO concept.

Throughout the evolution of the RC function, the management issue has emerged as a crucial condition for an effective aid-coordination system at the country level. The authority of the RC *vis-à-vis* the members of the UN Country Team seems to have become more limited in its long-term perspective. Given that responsibilities seem to have expanded, however, the risk of a "capability-expectations gap" for the RC system is identified, whereby demands are frequently not matched with a corresponding capacity and authority.

Practice of UN aid coordination

On the basis of a convoluted mandate, RCs are fulfilling multifaceted roles in different contexts. Their main orientations are, first, towards partner-country alignment; second, internally towards UN operational activities for development; and third, externally towards other donors. Underlying these three are additional duties, in particular advocacy for the UN system values, standards, principles and activities in a given country, and follow-up to global conferences and agreements.

Alignment with partner-country requirements

Aid relationships regularly contain an element of disparity between country demand and donor programming. The primacy of the host government can be seen as one of the guiding principles for all UN entities with operational activities for development, and it is ingrained in the operational policies for the RC system. The inclusion of national authorities in UN planning and programming processes is frequently stressed. RCs have to rely on limited means in trying to ensure alignment of UNCT activities with partner-country requirements, in particular during project implementation. Since UN entities often have a stake in supporting partner-country aid coordination directly, this sometimes leads to a perception of UN exemption from alignment processes, which is complicated by the fact that a number of UN member states do not consider the aid-effectiveness process that originated in the OECD-DAC working party on aid effectiveness to be of sufficient legitimacy.

External aid coordination

In a majority of countries, RCs are co-chairing, together with host governments, high-level aid-coordination fora for external development partners, which pay tribute to the special recognition and legitimacy, but also to the unique nature of the relationship that the UN and the RC – as its highest-ranking representative – traditionally enjoy in partner countries. In these situations, RCs aim for a coherent representation of the UN development system within the larger donor group, while ensuring the proper functioning of the aid-coordination forum. The guiding documents for the RC system reveal that UN internal coordination constitutes the clear priority, with external coordination taking place as a mere afterthought. For RCs to fully carry out their role in external aid coordination, this would require an adequate level of support and capacity.

Internal aid coordination

Aid coordination internal to the UN development system is the prime responsibility of every RC, and the related mechanisms and processes are fairly more developed than those corresponding to the alignment with partner countries and external aid coordination. Notwithstanding significant variation in terms of the size and composition of UNCTs, the average number of UN entities active per country is around 15, which is often as large – or larger – than the number of external donors with a country presence. Covering a full project cycle, a number of instruments enable the RC to perform aid coordination, including the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDAF's results-reporting matrix are at the disposal of RCs. Evidence suggests, however, that significant differences between "intended" and "realised" strategy are persistent, coupled with signs of duplication of processes resulting from the vertical organisation of the UN development system.

Reasons why the role of the RCs in coordinating UNCT assistance is meeting challenges include incentive structures within individual agencies that sometimes favour competition, distinction and visibility over cooperation; competition of agencies for turf and donor funding; and imbalances within the composition of the UNCT. At the same time, there

are also obstacles on the side of partner governments, including potential gains to be made from playing individual UN entities off against each other, as well as a certain wariness towards bringing the UNCT closer together, as this could lead to stronger pressures through a "united front" of UN entities and beyond.

Shifting expectations? The evolving role and mandate for the RCs

RCs serve a multitude of needs and perform numerous roles only partially reflected in their formal mandate. Stakeholder perspectives and the analysis of the existing operational guidance suggest that political disagreement is strong among stakeholders about what is – and ought to be – the future, the role and mandate of the RC. Four major groupings of stakeholders can be differentiated: first, those that are directly affected by the RC system, in particular partner governments and involved UN entities; second, those that are responsible for its functioning, in particular UN member states and the UNDP as manager of the system; third, those that collaborate with the RC system, such as humanitarian actors, and the UN Secretariat in peacekeeping; and finally, the RCs themselves. Longstanding disagreements among these groupings have complicated negotiations about fundamental policies for the RC system policy, and have contributed to their complexity and ambiguity as a necessary condition to accommodate competing perceptions. In several regards, there exists a discrepancy between the *de jure* mandate and the *de facto* role of RCs. Differing perceptions relate in particular to the following three areas:

- Mandate: Traditionally, a predominantly technical approach towards the RC relationship with governments is foreseen, but with, for example, human rights gaining more practical bearing, there have been calls to increase the normative and political role of RCs.
- Coverage: Over time, the orientation of the RC system has moved "beyond development", breaking down traditional UN silos in its course. Member states disagree in their assessments to what extent such evolution is welcome, and should be encouraged further.
- Authority: There also exists a controversial debate about the appropriate relationship between the RC and UNCT members, with some

advocating for a transformation of the current collegial system to one relying on arbitration or direction.

- Orientation: Regarding the appropriate balance between the internal and external aid-coordination functions of the RC mandate, there is a concern that the RC function is becoming too secluded and unresponsive towards the broader donor grouping.

In order to move forward, it is suggested that expectations placed upon the RC system need to be brought in line (again) with its existing mandate and capabilities.

Differentiation within the RC system

The UN development system has a presence in more than 130 countries worldwide, and it is often viewed as having one of the most heterogeneous country portfolios, which has necessitated a high degree of variation in terms of aid-coordination models applied. One of the drivers of this differentiation is the "new geography of global poverty", which triggered a debate about the future size and composition of the UN presence. The claim towards UNCT inclusiveness, which faces criticism on grounds of high transaction costs but is often seen as the "politically correct route" towards aid coordination, is setting narrow limits for reform attempts. In contrast, a closer collaboration of those few "large-spending" entities is sometimes advocated as an alternative coordination model.

Different hats of the RC

Lacking an overarching strategy to guide the adaptation of the UN country-level presence and corresponding coordination mechanisms, practical differentiation within the UN development system evolves iteratively from the bottom-up through the RC system. Five different patterns are distinguishable. Apart from the "standard" or default case as well as those countries where there is no RC, the multifaceted system encompasses the "Delivering as One" coordination model, countries faced with a humanitarian crisis with relief efforts coordinated by a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), those in the context of a political and/or peacekeeping mission ("integrated mission") under a (Deputy) Special Representative of the

Secretary-General (DSRSG), as well as the Joint Office model. The latter represents an interesting case aimed at rationalising the country presence of the UN development system by means of agency representation. A comparative analysis of the different adaptation patterns identifies country circumstances, the degree of RC authority and the partner countries' approach towards UN internal aid coordination as key factors. Against this background, there could be ground for the argument that the UN development system is currently lacking an RC system model to deal with the particular situation of middle-income countries facing globalisation challenges. Finally, in the case of small (island) states or middle-income countries with a relatively limited UNCT presence, the Joint Office model could be applied.

Conclusions

A number of broad conclusions and recommendations are presented in the final chapter focussing on the following four areas.

Role, mandate and functioning of the RC system

The study has shown that, as a result of the disaccord among member states about the role, functioning and future direction of the UN development system, the essential elements of the RC system are in a constant state of flux. By assigning individual RCs with multiple functions, for example in humanitarian affairs or peacekeeping, the RC system is serving to integrate the traditional silos of the UN system, and in that sense could be seen to move UN aid coordination "beyond development". This evolving conversion has not yet been formally acknowledged by member states however, which makes the RC system vulnerable to reproach and criticism. Against that background, it is recommended that member states forge a new consensus about the RC engagement, including in political and normative concerns, and address the institutional implications regarding the appropriate mechanism(s) to reconcile competing demands. The study further finds that there exists a certain mismatch between what the RC system is able to accomplish in terms of expectations placed upon it, which reflects the incongruity between the claim for horizontal coherence and a vertically organised UN development system. Addressing this

mismatch would necessitate empowering the RC in terms of capacities as well as competencies, including through system-wide career paths, a matrix reporting arrangement for UNCT members to report to both the RC as well as their individual agency heads and further support to utilise RC leadership positions in external aid coordination.

Management of the RC system

One of the main findings coming out of the study is the pivotal role that the UNDP plays for the proper functioning of the RC system and UN country-level aid coordination more broadly. Unrivalled within the UN development system, the UNDP has a mandate for system-wide coordination and services, including the management of the RC system, which makes it the "primus inter pares" among the UN development entities. Exercising these function while continuing to be operationally active has its inherent challenges, however. In particular, perceived or actual conflicts of interest that arise from the current model are found to have a persistently detrimental effect on the functioning of the RC system, which leads to the conclusion that, at some point, member states may have to re-examine the issue of where to anchor the management of the RC system. Of the four principal alternatives that were identified in Chapter 3, the "system-wide coherence" option offers a clear, but also more politically challenging opportunity for grounding the RC system in the UNDP as a strong organisation that has both operational and system-wide functions, albeit one that is not burdened by mandate overlap and conflicts with other entities of the UN development system. As a second-best but potentially more feasible option, member states should push for a full implementation of the functional firewall.

Decentralisation

The shape of the UN country presence as well as its further differentiation are determined to a large extent by an agency-driven decision-making process with little regard for the strategic orientations of the system as a whole. Giving RCs a stronger role in the composition of an adequate UN engagement at the country level would run counter to supply-driven tendencies. The specific RC model to be applied in a given country

should furthermore be decided upon with due regard to cost-benefit considerations, in accordance with the principle "as light as possible, and as heavy as necessary". The Joint Office model has demonstrated ample potential for the rationalisation of the UN field presence and should be re-examined with a view towards its expansion. The study also suggests that the RC guidelines should allow more flexible approaches that neither describe universal inclusiveness requirements, nor focus on a pre-determined set of agencies only. Whereas coordination-intensive model might be justified in certain contexts, the requirements are much different in others, and it is therefore suggested that the "inclusiveness" principle that is underlying the RC system be reviewed and possibly replaced by a new "subsidiarity" norm of determining aid-coordination coverage in a flexible and country-based manner implemented through RC leadership. Such a decentralisation of decision-making power to the RC finally should be accompanied by a parallel drive towards the harmonisation of business practices at the global level.

UN Aid coordination and division of labour

Recent years have seen a strong focus on aid coordination as a pragmatic and politically feasible way of maximising overall effectiveness and efficiency of the UN's operational activities for development. Attempting to bring together – by means of country-level aid coordination through the RCs – the UN development system, which member states created in a complex and fragmented manner, is a challenging task, however. Theory suggests that marginal benefits of increased coordination bear transaction costs at the agency, inter-agency and system-wide levels. While it has been suggested elsewhere that returns on UN aid-coordination investments are still positive, that the current approach is reaching its limits is increasingly being acknowledged by member states. Against this background, the study suggests that structural reform at the global level aimed at establishing a clearer division of labour between different UN entities could effectively pre-empt at least part of today's country-level coordination challenges. Given the close linkage of the fragmentation challenge to underlying funding practices by member states, it further concludes that in order to increase the likelihood of success, parallel efforts would have to be pursued to establish new and innovative mechanisms for funding the UN development system that potentially go "beyond aid". The

reform impulses coming from the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 debates might present suitable opportunities for member states to move towards a clearer division of labour.

Outlook

The future of the RC system is closely intertwined with that of the UN (development) system more broadly. In fact, the RC system has become a shadow battlefield of sorts where different stakeholder conceptions about the future of the UN development system are played out. Ultimately, however, the focus on aid coordination at the country level presents only part of the picture. It is only through concerted actions that encompass both the country-level operations and structural deficiencies at the global level that a true UN development "system" will be forged.

1 Introduction [1]

How do the different funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations that are working towards development collaborate so as to ensure that their contributions are implemented in an efficient, effective and meaningful way? This question is explored by focussing on the Resident Coordinators, who are (usually) the UN's highest-ranking officials in 130 partner countries with a UN presence. Resident Coordinators ARE tasked with coordinating all assistance coming from the various funds, programmes and agencies that together form the United Nations development system.[2] In addition, in a majority of countries, the RCs also have been given a leadership role, together with partner governments, to coordinate all aid coming from the broader donor community. Against the background of the ever growing complexity and fragmentation of today's aid business – both within as well as outside the UN – there are major efforts underway to adapt and adjust the RC system to current and emerging requirements. Increasingly, the RC has been recognised as *"a key driver of system-wide coherence of operational activities for development*" (UNSG 2012b, 25). In the words of one of the experts interviewed, *"a functioning RC system is key for a functioning UN system."*[3]

Within the UN context, the demand for aid coordination is driven by two factors: first, an internal drive towards improving the efficiency of the UN development system itself, and second, an external impulse originating from the aid-effectiveness discourse.

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1 This study forms part of a broader research agenda at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) on the perspectives for the reform of the United Nations development system. The research agenda is funded by the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) / Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany. The author wishes to gratefully acknowledge this support.

2 Different opinions exist about the specific composition of the "UN development system". For the purposes of this study, the term refers to those UN agencies, funds and programmes that engage in "operational activities for development". Operational activities for development are carried out with the promotion of development as the primary objective and they cover both longer-term development activities as well as shorter-term humanitarian assistance (UNSG 2012a, 10). There are currently 37 UN entities that fit into this category. A complete list of them can be found in the Annex.

3 Personal interview conducted by the author, November 2012.

The paper deliberately places the focus on the UN's country-level aid coordination as opposed to corresponding processes at the regional or headquarters level. It does so for two reasons: first, there is near universal agreement among development practitioners and scholars alike that taking the local context into account is the single most vital ingredient for development success. As of late, the aid/development-effectiveness paradigm reinforced this shift of focus from the global level, donor-driven agenda towards emphasising the crucial role of country ownership for development (Booth 2011). Second, within UN circles and among member states, because of a political impasse, prospects for far-reaching reform proposals, which include the consolidation of agencies and mandates, are dim (but the merger of four entities to form UN Women in 2010 was a noteworthy exception). This situation has resulted in a pragmatic shift towards the country and operational levels (Weinlich 2011b, 2011a). It is against this background that the RC system has seen a resurgence of interest in recent years, whereby it has become one of the primary targets for improvements and reform within the UN development system (UNSG 2011, 3). A reform measure that has been receiving particularly strong attention in current UN debates is the "Delivering as One" (DaO) pilot, which includes – as one of the four central elements – measures to strengthen the RC as the "One leader" of the UN development system at the country level. Against this background, the attention paid to the RC system is warranted.

Sixty years into the venture of development aid, the proliferation of donors and the fragmentation of aid across and within countries is a reality that recipient countries and donors, including the UN development system, increasingly have to reckon with (Knack / Rahman 2008; OECD 2011a; WB 2007). In that sense, the UN development system is an interesting case, as it is often seen as one multilateral actor with a high degree of intrinsic fragmentation. Indeed, the UN development system represents more of a loose network of individual entities that are held together by little more than a limited number of shared systems, a sense of commonality and a common basis within the UN system (Browne 2011, 111; Mueller 2010a, 29; Weiss 2009, 72). Sustaining and increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the UN's development aid under these circumstances is an enormous challenge that offers many lessons that are relevant far beyond the UN's boundaries. Indeed, virtually all donor organisations – bilateral, multilateral, even non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and others – as well as partner-country governments are struggling to adjust their aid models

and the aid relationship they are based on to the ever growing complexity of today's aid business (Riddell 2007, 18 ff.).

While its influence and weight have diminished relative to other players in recent years, the UN development system still constitutes a ubiquitous component of the multilateral aid architecture (Mueller 2010a, 2010b; Weinlich 2011b; Riddell 2007; and others). Operational activities for development constitute and will continue to constitute the core of the UN's business and, in terms of finances, accounts for the highest share of all UN activities. The majority of the US$ 15.5 billion for operational activities for development is being implemented in approximately 130 countries worldwide – in the standard case under the coordinating authority of an RC.

According to the UN Charter, the UN development system was created *"to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character."* The Charter, however, never contained any arrangements for an overarching authority to manage the differentiated institutional system of funds, programmes and other entities that were to evolve in the coming decades. This was a grave mishap, as each new agency was subsequently endowed with a separate mandate, governing board,[4] and reporting and accountability lines. As a result, the UN development system has been described as a "machine" that has evolved into arguably *"the most complex organization in the world"* as early as 1969 (UNDP 1969, iii). Accordingly, the scourges of the UN development system are duplication, fragmentation, competition and lack of overall guidance and management. It soon became evident that the lack of an authoritative force steering and managing the system as a whole constitutes the single most dominant factor determining its development to this day. Due to the lack of an overarching structure with the commanding authority necessary to bring about coherence, coercively influencing the direction of activities has never been a viable option. Instead, coordination has become the dominant model of structuring the relationships among UN entities as well as externally. The RC system is conceptualised as the linchpin of this relationship, charged with holding together the parts of the UN development system at the country level.

4 "Governing board" is the generic term used for the oversight body of the specialised agencies, recognising that their actual boards might carry a different label. The governing bodies of the funds and programmes that are under the control of the General Assembly and ECOSOC are normally referred to as "executive boards".

The paper aims to provide an in-depth exploration of the role and functioning of the RC system for the benefit of the UN development system as a whole. By doing so, it aims to contribute to current debates within the UN context and among member states that aim for a repositioning and redefinition of the RC system embedded in the UN development system operations at the country level. The UN's field of activity ranges from least-developed to upper-middle-income countries; from states struggling with development challenges to those faced with fragility, political transition and humanitarian crises; and from small island state to the most populous countries in the world. This variety of country contexts has necessitated a high degree of variation within the application of the RC system, and depending on which criteria are applied, there are at least five diverging patterns distinguishable. Based on an in-depth analysis of the "standard" – or default – case of the RC system, as well as an assessment of its opportunities and limitations, the paper aims to develop some proposals on how current practices could be further improved.

The structure is as follows: After having introduced the topic and established the theoretical perspectives on aid coordination as well as the state of the literature, the case for UN aid coordination is established in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 then presents both the global as well as country-level organisational setup for the RC system. A particular focus is put on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has been given the responsibility of governing the RC system. An in-depth historical examination of how key categories of the RC system have evolved over time in response to structural changes within the UN development system provides the background for an assessment of the current "standard model" of the RC system in practice. Five variations of the model are identified in Chapter 5 and assessed in terms of their applicability in different country contexts, with a view on how to develop them further. The last chapter draws some key conclusions.

The paper draws from a variety of sources: first, a thorough desk review of the academic literature and the (vast) documentation from within the UN development system on country-level coordination has been undertaken. Second, through a compilation of data from the UN and other sources, a database was built on key characteristics of the RC system and the UN development system presence around the world and used for the analysis. Third, the study relied on primary data from three surveys of RCs, the UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as member states on aspects of the RC system that had been conducted by the UN Secretariat in the first half of

2012. Finally, these sources were complemented and triangulated through around 30 interviews and background discussions with a diverse group of stakeholders, including former and current Resident Coordinators, representatives of UN member states, agencies and others (see Annex).

1.1 The state of research

Somewhat surprisingly, given its centrality, little academic literature exists about the RC system specifically. This is in contrast to the rather vast and growing stock of official reports and documents from within the UN development system, as well as practitioners' accounts on various aspects of the Resident Coordinator system that is available and has served as a prime source for this paper (UNDP 1969, 1996; UNSG 2011, 2012b; Longhurst 2006; Messina 2007; Lindores 2012; and many more). More specific is the literature on the RC system proper, which mostly stems from UN encyclopaedias (e.g. Kulessa 1995; Volger 2006; Fomerand / Dijkzeul 2007). Additional literature that has been drawn upon can be broadly classified into the following three main branches.

First, a primary branch of literature is concerned with the properties and qualities of the UN as a system, as well as with its individual components. As the study of the RC system is closely interwoven with its host and guardian, there are a limited number of monographs on UNDP (Klingebiel 1999; Murphy 2006; Browne 2011) as well as books with extended chapters on UNDP (Stokke 2009; also compare the overview in Leininger / Weinlich 2012, 239). The literature becomes more extensive with higher levels of abstraction and has a clear tendency to focus on the political role of the United Nations, including on peacekeeping and the Security Council, at the expense of the UN development system. At the highest level of abstraction, there are numerous monographs providing a general overview about the UN system that proved useful for background information (e.g. Dicke / Huefner 1987; Luck 2003; Krasno 2004; Gareis / Varwick 2005; Thakur / Weiss 2009; and in particular the seminar handbook by Daws / Weiss 2007). Perspectives to be found are numerous and UN reform features prominently (cf. e.g. Aufricht 1970; Huefner 1995; Center for UN Reform Education 2008; among others). Coverage of UN reform issues with a particular focus on the UN development system seems to have proliferated significantly as a result of the most recent round of reform attempts that started with Kofi

Annan's Agenda for Change in 1997 and culminated in the High-Level Panel (HLP) on system-wide coherence in 2006 (e.g. Fomerand 2000; Bhatta 2000; Gillinson 2003; Luck 2003; Fomerand 2003, 2004; Jolly et al. 2004; Messner et al. 2005; Fues / Klingebiel 2006; Vatterodt 2008; Freiesleben 2008; Stokke 2009; Weiss 2010; FUNDS Project 2010; Fues 2010; Weinlich 2011b, 2011a; Singer 2011; Browne / Weiss 2012; and others). A number of expressly historical accounts of the UN system also provided useful insights into the structure and evolution of the UN development system that shapes the demand for aid coordination (Yoder 1997; Jolly / Emmerij / Weiss 2009; Weiss 2009, etc.). Finally, where available, reports by insiders and experienced senior UN personnel were used for triangulation purposes (Ryan / Morch 2005; Mueller 2006, 2010a). In particular, Chapter 2 on the context for UN aid coordination as well as Section 4.1 on the historical evolution of the RC system relied on these works.

A second strand of literature that this paper draws upon focusses on aid coordination and related issues under the overall theme of "aid/development effectiveness". While the aid/ development-effectiveness paradigm has a longer tradition – originating in particular from the landmark publication "Harmonizing Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery" (OECD 2003; cf. OECD 1988; Ross 1990; as well as Box 1 in the next section) – it has gained attention over the last decade in response to the conferences of Monterrey (2002), Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011), which placed a premium on the question of "how" aid was being delivered. Through this series of high-level events, donors committed to harmonise their operational policies, procedures, practices and institutions so as to minimise their impact on partner countries, as well as to deliver the aid they provide in a more efficient and effective manner. As is shown, in the context of the UN, the aid-effectiveness debate has presented a major impulse for the increased focus on the RC system in recent years (compare also the comprehensive study by Vatterodt 2008). The negative consequences on recipient countries of the increasingly fragmented state of the international aid architecture (Riddell 2007; Reisen 2009) have generally been well documented (Torsvik 2005; Knack / Rahman 2008). Throughout the debate, aid coordination has been identified as one useful approach for addressing these negative externalities. As a result, the literature on aid coordination in its various facets is comprehensive (see e.g. Dante 2002; Ashoff 2004, 2005; Bigsten 2006; Disch 2010; Obrovsky / Schlögl 2011; OECD 2011b; Bigsten / Tengstam 2012). At the same time, Bigsten (2006) concluded that

there is relatively *"little systematic academic research on the implications of coordination, or the lack thereof, on aid effectiveness."* Drawing on the existing aid-effectiveness literature, this paper aims to contribute to the research by offering an in-depth study of aid-coordination mechanisms within the UN development system, which constitutes one of the major channels of international development aid.

The third and final strand of literature deals with the functioning of international organisations (IOs) from a theoretical perspective. One common explanation analyses IOs in terms of their "agency" and how that distinguishes them from their "principal(s)" in their executive boards or other oversight bodies. While the recognition of the capacity for agency of international organisations such as the UN is a useful notion, solely focussing on "delegated authority", which varies according to the extent of the control mechanisms at the disposal of the governing boards, tends to disregard other crucial factors (expertise, normative power, rational-legal authority, etc.) that bureaucracies can resort to. In particular, neo-functionalist and social-constructivist approaches (such as Haas 1958, 1990; Dijkzeul 1997a, 1997b; Barnett / Finnemore 1999; Dijkzeul / Beigbeder 2002; Barnett / Finnemore 2004; Bauer 2006; Weaver 2008; Venzke 2008; Biermann / Siebenhüner / Schreyögg 2009; Masciulli / Molchanov / Knight 2009; Reinalda 2011; Bauer / Weinlich 2011; Ostereich 2012) deserve credit for broadening the picture on international bureaucracies to questions concerning the internal structure, governance and process dynamics taking place within them, thereby allowing for a more differential picture of how the UN development system functions (an overview is contained in Liese / Weinlich 2006). For example, Walle (2005) provides a critical analysis of the bureaucratic nature of aid agencies, from which he draws the conclusion that donors should systematically follow a "lead donor" approach in their collaboration. On the basis of his analysis, Easterly (2002 and 2004) comes to a similar conclusion, making the case for a higher degree of decentralisation in the administration of aid. For the case of the UN development system, the latter theme is explored in this paper. The concept of "incentives" within international bureaucracies in an environment characterised by complexity also provides significant explanatory power for the workings of the UN development system (de Renzio et al. 2005; Messner / Faust 2007; Reisen 2009). Haas' (1990) concept of organisational learning within international bureaucracies provides a theoretical argument for explaining the incremental approach of reforms and evolution that is generally characteristic of the

UN development system. Finally, Natsios (2010) is useful in identifying some of the bureaucratic fallacies inherent in the objective of establishing control over complex aid system, as illustrated for the case of United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The literature reviews have shown that there is currently a gap in UN scholarship relating to the RC system. In particular, the contribution of the RC system towards the broader functioning of the UN development system has not received much coverage. Given that the RC system constitutes one of the few system-wide instruments of the UN development "system", this seems both unexpected and unwarranted. This paper attempts to contribute towards filling that gap.

1.2 Theoretical perspectives on aid coordination

Reducing the negative effects associated with the proliferation of donors as well as the increasing fragmentation of their respective activities can generally be seen as the main objective of aid coordination. Albeit widely in use, aid coordination remains a rather ambiguous concept that is applied differently by different actors (WB 2001, 3; Ashoff 2004). As part of donor harmonisation efforts, the practice of aid coordination has also been highlighted in the discourse about aid- and development effectiveness, as laid out in the Paris Declaration (2005), Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and most recently in the Busan Outcome Document (2011). It is therefore necessary to discuss the concept from a theoretical perspective as well as to offer a definition for the context of the UN development system.

In its most general form, coordination is about giving a structure to the relationship between entities that are – by choice, chance or otherwise –linked together to different degrees. Different forms of the structured relationship are possible, with coordination generally referring to a harmonious "arrangement".[5] Being part of a structured relationship by definition assumes at least two distinguishable entities with their own identities, processes and mandates, albeit these entities do not necessarily have to be on an equal level.

An example of a particular structured – and in that senses "coordinated" – relationship is the model of *primus inter pares*, which refers to a group of

5 The latin root of the term is "ordinare", meaning "to arrange" or "put in order".

equals, with one that has special authority that is based not on jurisdiction but mutual recognition ("first among equals"). Other models are numerous and range from group self-coordination to those that rely on an authoritative coordinating function that is external to the group. Coordination always entails that, on the one hand, those participating remain distinguishable with their own structures and identities, but on the other hand that they have a principal openness to constraining and/or surrendering parts thereof for the sake of the common good. Aid coordination can have a formalised basis within an agreement of the participating entities, or it can have a more informal character. Through a process of institutional assimilation, structured high-level aid-coordination groups that are mirrored at sector-levels have emerged as the most common form in which aid coordination is practiced in most developing countries. In the vast majority of countries, RCs are indeed interacting with – and functioning within the context of – an organisational setup based upon this aid-coordination group model (cf. Chapter 3).

Partner-country responsibility presents the main "frame of reference" for aid coordination (cf. Ashoff 2004, 2). This principle has been enshrined in the OECD Guiding Principles for Harmonizing Donor Procedures (OECD 2003, 19; see Box 1) and has since then become one of the cornerstones of the aid-effectiveness paradigm in development thinking. As such, aid coordination on the donor side necessarily always entails an element of "harmonisation" of activities, policies and processes. In general, this relates to groups of donors that have operational activities within a country. For the UN development system, given its breakdown into numerous smaller entities, this results in the additional responsibility of internal aid coordination. It should also be noted that while donors – including from the UN development system – make frequent reference to the necessity of country leadership in aid-coordination processes, in a majority of cases, they continue to have a strong and influential role in aid coordination.

Box 1: The OECD-DAC and the ground rules for aid coordination

The challenge of aid coordination is certainly not unique to the UN development system. One stakeholder that has been very instrumental in the development of the concept of aid coordination is the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Since its establishment, the OECD-DAC has served as the global clearinghouse for instituting standards, definitions and best practices. In its landmark publication on "Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery" (OECD 2003[6]), it established nine guiding principles on the provision of aid, which can be seen as the nucleus of the aid-effectiveness paradigm that later culminated in the Paris Declaration. They are as follows:

1. Donors should support country-owned, country-led poverty reduction strategies [...] and base their programming on the needs and priorities identified in these.
2. Development assistance should be provided in ways that build, and do not inadvertently undermine, partner countries' sustainable capacity [...]
3. Coordination of donor practices enhances the effectiveness of aid, particularly for aid-dependent countries. Aid coordination should, whenever possible, be led by partner governments.
4. Reliance on partner government systems [...] is likely to enhance achievement of sustainable improvements in government performance.
5. Partner countries and donors have a shared interest in ensuring that public funds are used appropriately.
6. Donors should work closely with partner countries to address weaknesses in institutional capacity [...] that prevent reasonable assurance on use of cooperation resources.
7. [...] donors [...] should simplify and harmonise their own procedures to reduce the burden placed on partner countries.

6 Previous versions of the guiding principles were published in 1986 and 1992, already containing the principle of country leadership of aid coordination.

8. No single approach is suitable for all countries [...]
9. Assistance to empower civil society and support [...] the private sector also can enhance improvements in partner government performance.

The emphasis on the recipient government's prime responsibility for aid coordination – which in spirit is contained in all principles, but explicitly contained in particular in the third principle – has been highly influential and today has gained near universal recognition. The OECD has also advocated for a stronger promotion of decentralisation of staff, competencies and resources in the management of aid in favour of the local aid agency offices as a way of strengthening the voice and involvement of partner countries in the decision-making about aid allocation (OECD 2003, 123). What has hindered the contribution of the OECD-DAC, however, is the perception of it being an institution dominated by donor representatives and thus lacking legitimacy. As a result, the guiding principles have been criticised as being selective in focus. Knack and Rahman (Knack / Rahman 2008), for example, established the detrimental effects that hiring national staff ("poaching") can have for nascent partner-country capacities; however, this is an area where guidelines are still wanting.

For the purpose of this paper, "aid coordination" is conceptualised as a coping strategy pursued by UN entities, donor organisations as well as partner-country governments facing complex interdependencies. Accordingly, the definition is as follows:

> *Aid coordination comprises activities of two or more development partners that are intended to arrange their policies, programs, procedures, and practices so as to maximize the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of their aid resources through eliminating inconsistencies.* (Adapted from WB 2001, 3)

From a practical perspective, aid agencies frequently distinguish between policy coordination – which generally takes place between headquarters, as the practice of coordinating the content of aid programmes – and operational coordination, which is focussed on practical aspects of project and programme implementation on the ground (WB 2001; Bigsten 2006). The RC system falls into the latter category.

Most crucially, coordination is not an end in itself but rather a means towards an end – in this case, that of more effective, efficient and relevant delivery

of aid. Through misguided incentives within the participating bureaucratic structures, objectives can become blurred and, as a result, coordination can at times become a goal in and of itself. Within the UN development system context, the argument of the potentially unintended (by the principals) transformation of aid coordination has been most prominently advanced by Righter (Righter 1995). In a context such as that of the UN development system, which is characterised by fragmentation, duplication and overlap, coordination can therefore be seen as a necessary but insufficient condition for the effective delivery of aid.[7] In other words, the success in aid coordination does not necessarily entail or signify good development results; vice versa, coordination efforts should not, per se, be regarded as positive.

The success (or failure) of aid-coordination efforts depends on factors both external as well as internal to the aid-coordination group. Internal factors are based on the characteristics of those entities or donors participating in the aid-coordination process, and include:

- path dependencies and historical legacies as to how coordination is approached;
- the composition of the group including its size and homogeneity;
- the organisational structure, such as the specific type of leadership model and the degree of formalisation of working methods and relationships.

On the other hand, important external factors are:

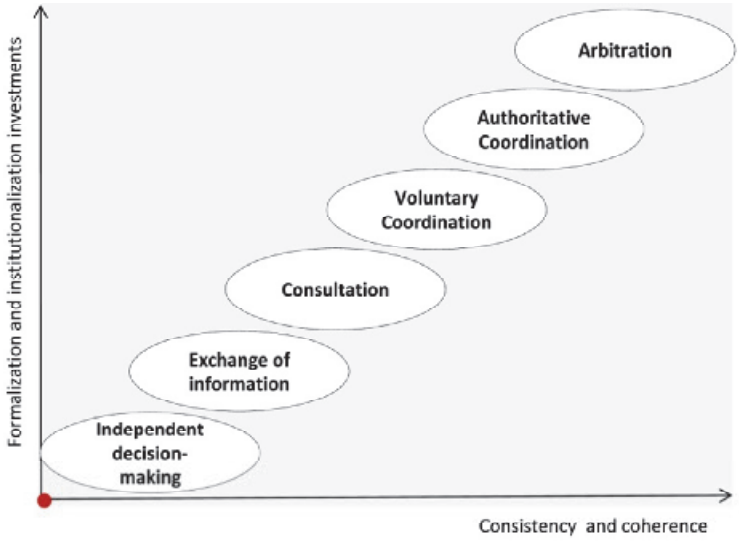
- the country context;
- the degree of government leadership in aid-coordination processes; and
- government capacity to perform aid coordination (cf. WB 2001, 6).

The following chapters look at these factors as key determinants of the UN's country-level aid-coordination processes in greater detail.

Based on the theoretical discussion, this paper introduces an analytical model that rests upon two propositions. First, it is assumed that given the plurality of country contexts, aid coordination is not a standardised approach with numerous varieties co-existing in parallel. These varieties could be further differentiated according to the residual degree of independence that the entities participating in the aid-coordination process retain. Second, a

7 Bigsten / Tegstam (2012); Torsvik (2005); Knack / Rahman (2008).

Figure 1: A continuum of aid-coordination model



Source: own compilation, based on a model for inter-ministerial coordination developed by Metcalfe (1994)

basic postulation from the literature is that with the size and complexity of the aid-coordination process come a requirement for protocol, formalisation and institutionalisation (Metcalfe 1994). Combining these two, we arrive at the following model (Figure 1).

The model illustrates that there are various approaches on how to structure relationships among aid agencies, ranging from "weaker" varieties (i.e. less formalised and less coercive in terms of curtailing agency independence) to "stronger" varieties (i.e. requiring higher levels of formalisation and entailing a more "authoritative" direction of agencies). For example, having simple mechanisms for real-time or ex-post exchange of information without prior consultation, voluntary or authoritative reconciliation (of activities, mandates, allocations, programming, etc.) or external arbitration in general terms will tend to require fewer investments into the formalisation and institutionalisation of the relationship between entities; while at the same time

coherency and consistency payoffs will also be more limited. The different options can be seen to form a continuum of aid-coordination models, which necessarily implies that there are numerous cross- and intermediate models and current labels should be seen as illustrative only, acknowledging that these are anything but discernible. It is also important to point out that the model deliberately focusses on the management aspects of aid coordination, as they are the focus of this paper, thereby excluding other aspects from consideration.

The following implications can be derived from the model:

- First, at least in principle, for each specific variety on the aid-coordination continuum applied in any given country, a myriad of other varieties with different mixes of coercion and formalisation are also conceivable. The benefit of having different aid-coordination models is the flexibility they allow for adaptation, contextualisation and customisation. With RCs being based in more than 130 countries worldwide, the UN provides ample possibilities for the application of a variety of aid-coordination models (cf. Chapter 5).
- Second, the expected gains in consistency and coherency have to be seen in light of the investments they incur in terms of the formalisation and institutionalisation of aid relationships. Coordination is not a goal in itself, and investments in it have to add value in terms of consistency and coherency gains. This is in line with the argument by Ashoff (2004, 3): "Coordination means additional expense and can therefore be justified from a financial point of view only if the reduction in transaction costs achieved through coordination exceeds the expense of coordination." In this sense, the model postulates that for different donor configurations and country contexts, an "optimal" level of coordination exists that, economically speaking, maximises the gains from coordination through a reduction and/or elimination of overlap and inconsistencies, while at the same time minimising the costs of coordination on the side of participating UN agencies and the partner government.
- Third, quantifying in particular the gains of aid coordination is virtually impossible in practice, as they relate mostly to factors that are either virtually impossible to express in monetary terms (i.e. "strengthened partner ownership"), or for which no counterfactual exists (i.e. "pro-

> gramming overlap avoided").[8] The methodological implication here, of course, is that the benefits of UN aid coordination and the RC system have to be explored by means of a qualitative approach.

Each of the perceivable aid-coordination models has a specific set of advantages and disadvantages. In general terms, more coercive or authoritative models of structured relationships can lead to resistance by those being coordinated when the aid coordination is perceived as an infringement of their independence and autonomy. It thus follows that in situations where "lower" levels of aid coordination work, there is no need to move towards more coercive and/or institutionalised forms. On the other hand, if there are persistent challenges, the model would advocate that a higher and more institutionalised form of aid coordination might be in order. At the same time, it is a basic premise of economic theory that competition – under conditions of a "level playing field" and market conditions – can lead to beneficial outcomes (but see Messner / Faust (2007, 4) for the theoretical argument why these conditions often do not hold for the case of aid). Accordingly, the argument is that

> [m]*ore coordination and harmonization is not always better: there is an optimal level of cooperation and harmonization, which allows for better coherence while leaving space for a healthy level of diversity and emulation.* (Severino / Ray 2010, 18)

It thus follows that the choice of one model of structuring relationships among different entities over another depends on various factors. The – actual or perceived – ratio of investments in the institutionalisation and formalisation of coordination mechanisms to gains in consistency and coherency (which assumingly translate into overall efficiency and effectiveness returns) is an obvious factor. At the same time, the value and unique contribution of diversity among coordination subjects also has to be taken into account. There are no simple keys to the choice of aid-coordination model.

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8 In an attempt to address this fundamental issue, ECOSOC in 2007 tasked the Secretary-General to report annually on the *"functioning of the resident coordinator system, including costs and benefits"*. The results, which are contained in E/2008/60, E/2009/76, E/2010/53 and E/2011/86, corroborate that while estimations of the costs of the RC system are possible, the benefits can only be assessed in qualitative terms, but not in monetary terms.

2 Setting the context: the case for UN aid coordination

While this paper specifically examines the country-level mechanisms, aid coordination occurs within – and in fact is a response to – broader dynamics of its institutional surroundings. What then is the state of affairs of the UN development system? Optimists often cite the fact that because overall financial contributions during the past 15 years – that is, the period from 1996 to 2011 – have been growing at a faster rate than total official development assistance (ODA), this serves as evidence that donor confidence in the abilities and performance of the UN entities continues to be strong (UNSG 2012a). Others see a system "in crisis" as a result of fragmentation and the unhealthy competition of UN entities independently vying for projects and funding (Weinlich 2011a; Browne 2011; Mahn 2012a). In particular, since the failed attempt at a comprehensive system overhaul – articulated by the expert panel on system-wide coherence established by the Secretary-General at the request of member states in 2006 – debates about the need for fundamental reform of the UN development system have become more vocal.

Taking these differing notions as a starting point, this chapter explores the case for UN aid coordination. The first section analyses the prevailing conditions within the UN development system and offers a discussion of its main implication, which is the demand for aid coordination. The centrality of the funding mechanisms and practices have repeatedly been identified as a crucial aspect of the key challenges the UN development system is facing today (Weinlich 2011a; Mahn 2012a), as well as a potential remedy for their solution, and are therefore covered in a second section.

2.1 Fragmentation, complexity, overlap

Today's aid architecture is characterised by what Severino and Ray have called "hypercollective action", which refers to the simultaneous trends of proliferation in the number of development entities, as well as fragmentation of their respective activities (Severino / Ray 2010; cf. OECD-DAC 2011a, 2011b). This phenomenon is not unique to the UN development system, but rather is something that all donor agencies are struggling with. Due to its historical evolution, however, the UN development system has been particularly struck by these challenges.

When the UN was established in 1945, it was rather visionary that the Charter already contained provisions *"to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character"* (Art. 1). For practical and political reasons, instead of establishing a more unified entity, the existing specialised agencies (SAs) working in specific policy areas – such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) – that existed at the time were brought into the UN development system through relationship agreements with ECOSOC. Faced with a situation that was the opposite of a "tabula rasa", during the negotiations of the Charter, the participating states opted for a structure of the UN system that, in retrospect, might have been driven by feasibility concerns rather than strategic vision. Accordingly,

> *[t]he basic decision was […] that the relationship to be established between the organization and the agencies would be one of coordination and cooperation rather than one of centralization and direction.*[9]

The history and evolution of the UN development system mirrors the global trends of entity proliferation and increasing fragmentation of their activities, which together result in complexity. Provisions for the establishment of new entities to address any new and upcoming challenge were built into the Charter. In parallel to the decolonialisation phase in the 1960s, this had the result that the number of specialised agencies, funds and programmes created to address new challenges in fields such as industrialisation, population growth and the environment within the UN development system multiplied to the current 15 specialised agencies and approximately 20 programmes and funds. Since the 1990s, proliferation has mostly halted (but note the establishment of UN Women in 2010 through the merger of four smaller entities[10]); however, to an extent this also marks the onset of fragmentation of activities, in response to the funding practices of major contributors (see next chapter).

The complexity of the UN development system has been strongly influenced by a sectoral logic, whereby the different entities – as the "components" of the UN development system – each cover their specific issue areas. Aimed at increasingly close scientific and technical collaboration among states in

9 Russell (1958), quoted in Fomerand / Dijkzeul (2007, 568).

10 Historically, there is only one case of a specialised agency going out of existence, which was the International Refugee Organization, which existed between 1956 and 1952. It was eventually succeeded by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

the hope of eventual spill-over effects in international diplomacy, the concept of "functionalism" provided the theoretical foundation for the initial setup. On the other hand, it has been argued that the resulting compartmentalisation of broad and interlinked challenges has served to "promote disaggregation rather than integration" (Righter 1995, 51). This "polycentrism" of the UN development system means in effect that there are various entities that are only loosely coupled together. The plethora of different labels given to the group of UN funds, programmes and specialised agencies that are active in development – UN development system, "family" (e.g. Browne 2011), "machinery", "network", "labyrinth" (Righter 1995), etc. – already is a good indication that there is a certain uneasiness with the label UN development "system".[11] Indeed, the compartmentalized design of the UN development system, which came to be seen as its most fundamental structural challenge, is closely related to the obstacle of fragmentation or the separation and the particularisation of efforts among different entities. Paradoxically, the difficulty in overhauling the existing structures has become a driving force for the creation of new ones, thereby resulting in further complexity. The absence of an overarching structure to manage the process of institutional development and adaptation to new priorities and fields of activity has had a particularly adverse effect. It has meant that the UN development system *"expanded by leaps and bounds in an uncoordinated process of growth"* (Fomerand 2003, iii). Over time, this process has resulted in a situation that Fomerand and Dijkzeul (2007, 561) describe as follows: *"The UN 'system' is highly fragmented, rife with competition, and certainly not a harmonious cooperative whole in which the parts work towards a common purpose."*

Much has been written about the negative impact of such complexity for the effectiveness and efficiency of development cooperation (Easterly 2004; Riddell 2007; Messner / Faust 2007; Knack / Rahman 2008). In economic terms, the proliferation in the number of UN entities can lead to inefficiencies as economies of scale are not being realised (Knack / Rahman 2008). Fragmentation of activities, in turn, can have numerous direct and indirect negative effects. Direct costs include significantly higher transaction costs through the multiplication of staff as well as programming, monitoring and

11 At the same time, there are plenty of examples where the label is being used and that do not accord to the same criteria either (e.g. the "international system"). In recognition of that fact, and since the label has become customary, it will be maintained in this paper.

reporting requirements. Indirect costs arise through the duplication of efforts (i.e. when two or more entities are working towards similar goals without taking each other's efforts into account, which thus results in inefficiencies) and mutual obstruction (efforts that cancel each other out) (Ashoff 2004, 2). Through agency competition and following donor incentives, some entities might also feel obligated to become active in sectors where they do have a comparative advantage (Knack / Rahman 2008, 12; Severino / Ray 2010, 13). Negative externalities can be particularly severe for partner countries, which have to carry the burden of increasing demands on their thinly spread administrative capacities, including the poaching of qualified staff to work on donor projects. More generally, the diffusion of responsibilities for development outcomes that are associated with numerous small-scale activities is also harmful (Knack / Rahman 2008, 2).

A recent survey of programme country governments confirmed several of these negative externalities. In particular, it found that almost 50 per cent of countries asked had strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that there is a significant amount of duplication within the UN development system (UNS 2012, 45), and a majority of respondents in low-income and lower-middle-income countries confirmed incidents of competition among UN agencies for donor funding (UNS 2012, 48). It thus comes as no surprise that one interviewee characterised the UN development system as being based on a "competitive organizational model".[12] Against this background, there seems to be ample justification for developing measures to cope with the complexity of the UN development system.

One of the potentially most far-reaching attempts at taking charge and instituting more direction within the UN development system was the creation of the senior-level post of Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation (DG Development) by the Secretary-General at the request of member states in the late 1970s (for details see Chapter 4). While the post existed for a number of years, it was never able to overcome the ingrained centrifugal forces.

The decentralised nature of the UN development system has also had implications on the extent and composition of the UN field presence. In the 1970s, member states had established that

12 Personal interviews conducted by the author, October 2012.

> *[t]he creation of new field offices or the enlargement of existing ones should depend on the volume of programme operations in the particular country and should be undertaken with due regard to the need for economy. (UNGA 1970)*

Given the lack of an overarching mechanism such as the DG Development for most of the time, however, the decision to open a country office by any fund, programme or agency is normally determined in consultation with partner countries by the governing board of the fund, programme or agency without taking a larger systemic strategy into consideration. Internal political economies of partner countries may have a part in this, as responsibility for decision-making predominantly falls to line ministries, which, as the direct counterparts of UN funds, programmes and agencies, may exhibit much less regard for overall strategic priorities and aid-effectiveness considerations than ministries of finance and/or economic planning, which are normally charged with strategic considerations of UN engagement.

The longstanding response to the growing complexity within the UN development system has been a matching drive towards strengthened coordination. One of the reasons why aid coordination has been favoured over other measures is the general lack of political support for more structural changes, such as a reduction in the overall number of entities within the UN development system (Weinlich 2011b). The absence of a central steering mechanism led to a situation where numerous mid-level coordination centres with partial and more limited authority have emerged, which Fomerand and Dijkzeul (2007, 567) call the "coordination machinery". As a result, instead of being centralised within the Secretariat or UNDP, coordination responsibilities within the UN development system are diffused at the decentralised level, but these responsibilities have frequently not been followed by an adequate transfer of authority and resources.

The focus on coordination is also not a new phenomenon. Robert McLaren (1980, 139) has referred to the second development decade of the 1970s as "the coordination decade". However, a number of more recent assessments have come to the conclusion that in some areas – including field-level operations, as evidenced by the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as One" pilot phase (Todd et al. 2012), and the reviews of the RC system (Lindores 2012) and the UNDAF (Balogun 2012) – aid coordination as a coping strategy for complexity within the UN development system may have reached its limit; further strengthening of coordination activities may lead to

unintended outcomes, such as the proliferation of "coordinocrats".[13] While this may not be the majority view, one interviewee characterised aid-coordination efforts as *"neither ideal, nor effective"* but as *"all we* (i.e. the UN) *have"*[14] in the absence of more systemic reforms undertaken by UN member states.

In summary, it can be said that the different agencies, funds and programmes are structured according to an internal logic that is not directed towards coherence per se. Whereas some entities address different sectors of development, such as health and environment, others are meant to respond to different client groups such as children or workers, and still others work on cross-sectoral subjects such as culture or industry. Making the entities of the "UN puzzle", which are organised according to very different logics, "fit" together is a tremendous challenge for country-level aid coordination (ibid.).

2.2 The quest for systemic funding

Aid coordination is closely connected to the issue of current funding practices of the UN development system: if the current funding system were to undergo a fundamental structural transformation, the necessity for aid coordination as a coping strategy for fragmentation services would be drastically reduced. Sally Fegan-Wyles, the former head of the UN Development Group Office (which subsequently changed its name to the Development Operations Coordination Office, DOCO) and a very knowledgeable resource on the UN development system, remarked in an interview once that *"it will be difficult to achieve a 100% 'One UN' under the current funding structure,"* noting that 90 per cent of the current dysfunctions of the UN comes from the incoherent funding structure.[15] Indeed, funding practices have been identified as one of the key drivers of UN development system fragmentation (Weinlich 2011b; Mahn 2012b; UNSG 2012a). In the words of Bruce Jenks (Jenks 2012, 24), who is a long-time UN staffer and expert on the state of the UN development system: *"The international community gets the system it funds."*

13 JIU (1999, para. 14), quoted in Mueller (2010a, 33).

14 Personal interviews conducted by the author, December 2012.

15 Quoted in von Freiesleben (2008).

The UN development system was created in the second half of the 20th century as a reaction to emerging problems in member states. Overall, the system has a comprehensive, differentiated mandate, which often makes it difficult, if not impossible, to objectively determine the budget needed for implementation. The volume of contributions depends on a variety of factors; in addition to reports detailing needs in strategic plans presented by UN agencies, donors also have financial and domestic-policy restrictions. In the early days of the UN development system, funding was centralised. But it ultimately proved futile to monopolise the funding role.

Shortly following the establishment of UNDP, the specialised agencies, as well as UNDP itself, started to receive – and sought out in turn – additional earmarked funding from other sources outside the central funding mechanism. While the decentralised approach to resource mobilisation allowed the UN entities to directly approach donors to get support for specific programmes, it has also generated competition between individual UN agencies. Mobilising resources is both an opportunity and a necessity for individual UN agencies, which also then have an incentive for pushing agency visibility and for setting themselves apart from the competition. This "fragmentation impulse" is at the base of many of the challenges the UN development system is facing today. Margret Joan Anstee, who was one of the authors of the so-called Capacity Study, which was the most influential reform proposal in the history of the UN development system, stated: *"A main reason why the Capacity Study did not achieve its aims was that the power of the purse fell down and that, in the long run, was the downfall of UNDP."*[16]

For a number of years, there has been a growing trend in so-called earmarked or multi-bi funds, which are designed to make the UN more pliable for bilateral interests and priorities. While the share of core financing has been more or less steady for years, earmarked funding has skyrocketed. In 2010 core financing made up only 30 per cent of the US$ 15.5 billion in total funding for operational activities for development (UNSG 2012a), which is a marked change from 15 years earlier, when the share was still 63 per cent. Now, nearly 90 per cent of earmarked funding is restrictively earmarked by individual donors for specific projects. This entails significant challenges for the UN development system, as costs increase whenever rules and deadlines (have to) differ from those set forth internally by UN agencies. Depending

16 Margret Joan Anstee, quoted in Weiss (2009, 105).

on their specific design, earmarked contributions therefore can significantly increase the amount of red tape. A report by the Secretary-General speaks of an "indirect" relation between earmarked funding and the mandates, guidelines, priorities and targets of the various governance boards at UN agencies "in the best case". Earmarked funding regularly encourages UN agencies to expand their activities at the margins of their mandates, which undermines the oversight of the multilateral boards in the end (cf. Mahn 2012b).

The current funding structure can therefore be seen as a major driving force behind the fragmentation of the UN development system (Weinlich 2011a). While a solution for the challenge will have to be designed and implemented at the central level, the centralisation of the resource mobilisation function at the country level through the RC as part of the "Delivering as One" initiative – thus mirroring the centralised funding position of UNDP in its early days of existence – has the potential to bring about positive change.

3 Organisational setup of UN aid coordination

How is UN aid coordination organised? As it has been shown in the previous section, the context for overall UN aid coordination – in terms of institutions, prevailing practices, and in particular, funding structures – is characterised by conditions that are certainly not favourable for the organisational setup and functioning of its mechanisms, processes and procedures. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the former – the organisational setup for UN aid coordination – with the subsequent chapter then focussing on the analysis of actual practice. The analysis is based upon the assumption that institutions and the organisational setup have a significant effect upon – and influence the functioning of – processes that take place within their framework and the outcomes produced by them. Analysing them is crucial for understanding the RC system.

The chapter covers three broad dimensions of the organisational setup for UN aid coordination. It starts out by examining the "governance structure" at the highest level. For the purposes of this paper, the governance dimension refers to the intergovernmental realm serviced by diplomatic missions of the UN member states and tasked with providing overall policy guidance – to the UN development system in general, and the inter-agency coordination machinery in particular. This realm is differentiated from the inter-agency sphere serviced by the representatives of the different agencies,

funds and programmes and aimed at coordinating their activities. UNDG, working at the level of agency headquarters, constitutes the main instrument for inter-agency coordination and support to the RC system at the global level, with the RC system essentially serving as the country-level equivalent. The third and final section then covers the issue of the management of the RC system, which refers to the day-to-day administrative management of the RCs in areas such as personnel management, overall reporting and inter-agency support. The latter has been identified as a crucial element for the overall inner functioning of the RC system and is explored in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

3.1 Governing UN aid coordination

Given the nature of the UN development system outlined in the previous chapter, member states would be called upon for clear direction. The main forum for them to do so is ECOSOC, which is one of the six main organs of the UN hovering at the top of the coordination machinery. ECOSOC has the mandate to

> *[c]o-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to the members of the United Nations*.[17]

This responsibility extends to the UN specialised agencies – including the two Bretton Woods institutions – its subsidiary functional commissions[18] plus the five regional commissions[19] (UN Charter articles 60, 63 (2) and 68). As all the UN funds and programmes were established subsequent to the adoption of the Charter, the document itself contains no specific pro-

17 UN Charter, Article 63(2).

18 These are the Statistical Commission; Commission on Population and Development; Commission for Social Development; Commission on the Status of Women; Commission on Narcotic Drugs; Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; Commission on Science and Technology for Development; Commission on Sustainable Development; and the United Nations Forum on Forests. In addition, there are a number of other temporary and standing subsidiary bodies.

19 These are the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

visions for them. However, that their activities should also be coordinated by ECOSOC is generally justified by extension of its coordinating role *vis-à-vis* the entities mentioned above, which is a rather weak basis. The exact nature and scope of ECOSOC's coordination function was left for its membership to decide during the process (Rosenthal 2005, 14), which, for various historical and political reasons, member states have interpreted to be rather confined. Finally, there is a significant level of ambiguity contained in the UN Charter in terms of both ECOSOC's role and also its relationship *vis-à-vis* the General Assembly (Rosenthal 2007, 138). Vested with such a weak – and, in many respects, not clearly defined – mandate, and lacking membership resolution, ECOSOC for decades has experienced a gradual shifting of its powers elsewhere,[20] in particular:

- to the General Assembly, where all (instead of just 54) members are represented;
- to the specialised agencies, which early on concluded "relationship agreements" with ECOSOC that codified their autonomy based upon their establishment as international organisations endowed with legal personality, separate funding mechanisms (in most cases) and membership, and separate governing bodies;
- to the executive boards of the funds and programmes where major powers felt they had a stronger and more immediate influence over the direction of activities and funds than in ECOSOC.

To this day, member states, as well as stakeholders within the UN development system more broadly, continue to struggle with the question of the most appropriate relationship and division of labour between ECOSOC, the Secretariat, UNDG, the governing boards of the funds, agencies and programmes, as well as DOCO and UNDP.[21]

As a result of this situation, ECOSOC today has largely been divested of its oversight and coordination function for the operational activities for development (Rosenthal 2005; Messner et al. 2005; Rosenthal 2007; Weiss 2010) – less in theory, but even more so in practice. This leads to the conclusion that there is no central intergovernmental body within the United Nations

20 For the alternative argument, namely that ECOSOC was never intended to constitute a strong coordination body, compare Rosenthal (2005, 10).

21 This issue was raised in a number of personal interviews conducted by the author with experts on the RC system (October–December 2012).

that is providing continuous authoritative guidance to the funds, agencies and programmes of the development system in terms of steering the division of activities and mandating programme priorities and the allocation of funds. Rather, those decisions are taken at a decentralised level through the governing bodies of the individual entities. However, system-wide guidance by member states has frequently been hampered by incoherent messages sent by member states, stemming from the fact that different governing boards are frequently serviced and attended by representatives of different ministries within one government that frequently do not speak with one voice.

Partly in an attempt to provide better – and better informed – guidance, member states committed themselves to conduct, in regular intervals, a system-wide monitoring exercise of operational activities for development[22] that would complement their agency-specific oversight through the governing boards. This exercise, which was called the (triennial) "comprehensive policy review"[23] process, has to date evolved into the main instrument for member states' guidance and orientation to the UN development system, including, as a key element, the RC system.

One of the key functions where the question of governance plays out in practice is the appointment of new RCs. In line with the (original) spirit of the RC as an essentially operational instrument – and in light of its status as his/her designated representative – the right to appoint RCs is reserved by the Secretary-General. Selection of nominees from a roster of suitable candidates in turn is done through an "Inter-Agency Advisory Panel (IAAP)", which is an inter-agency consensus and clearing mechanism. As the chair of UNDG, the UNDP Administrator recommends a candidate to the Secretary-General based on the IAAP-prepared short-list. The Secretary-General then makes the final decision, taking into account qualifications, geographical representation and other factors. While there have been repeated attempts to establish member state influence in the RC selection and appoint-

22 Cf. footnote 2.

23 The comprehensive policy reviews have been established by member states through GA Res 31/197 – the same resolution that established the RC system proper. The mandate calls for ECOSOC to conduct *"comprehensive policy reviews of operational activities throughout the UN system, bearing in mind the need for balance, compatibility and conformity with the priorities established by the GA for the system as a whole."* In 2007, it was decided to conduct the exercise every four years, leading to the new name Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

ment process in the past, to date the Secretary-General has been able to resist such steps, which would risk politicising the function. Criticism of the process has also been forthcoming from the UN development system, focussing in particular on the role of the UNDP Administrator,[24] which some perceive as having undue influence.

Member state governance processes – through ECOSOC, the governing boards of the funds, programmes and agencies as well as through instruments such as the comprehensive policy review process – are in turn accompanied by inter-agency efforts at coordination within UNDG and other fora. It is this UN aid-coordination machinery, both at the global and country levels, that is addressed in the next two sections.

3.2 UN aid coordination at the global level

To address the challenges of fragmentation, incoherence and overlap, an elaborate institutional machinery for inter-agency aid coordination within the UN development system has evolved over time. Given its purpose of achieving more system-wide coherence, this machinery is organised in a horizontal fashion, that is, across the boundaries of individual entities. Fundamental challenges for this attempt arise from the fact that the majority of institutions, systems and processes are organised in a vertical manner, resting within the boundaries of each single entity (Mahn 2012b).

At the top of the machinery sits the highest-level and longest-standing board for inter-agency coordination within the UN system: the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. All specialised agencies, 11 funds and programmes, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are part of the CEB, which approves policy statements on behalf of the UN system as a whole. All stakeholders participate in the decision-making process, which gives its decisions significant weight, but the downside is that the resulting decisions tend to be at the level of the least-common denominator. Its effectiveness is particularly limited by the fact that the Secretary-General, who heads the CEB, is vested with no

24 In addition, it should be noted that the Secretary-General's authority in appointing RCs does not extend to the authority to recall them once they have come under UNDP management.

authoritative power to enforce any policies or measures *vis-à-vis* the autonomous specialised agencies.

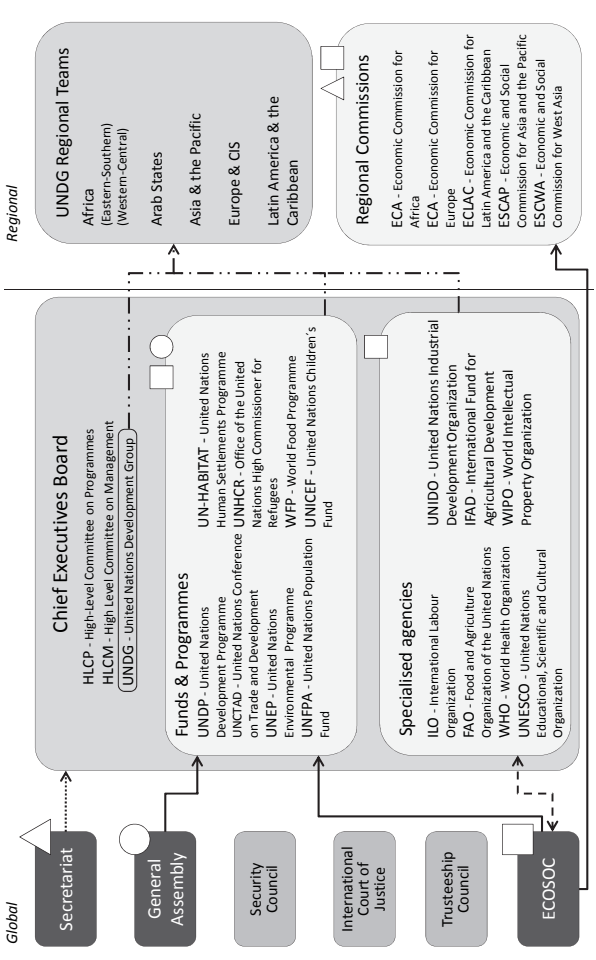
While the CEB has a mandate for UN system-wide coordination, which includes peacekeeping, norms, human rights and other areas, it is the UN Development Group – formally one of three committees[25] under the CEB – that is the UN's inter-agency body tasked with the mandate for aid coordination of the UN's operational activities for development (cf. Figure 2). UNDG has been specifically created as an interlocution mechanism within the UN development system for the reception of – and system-wide implementation of – high-level policy guidance received from member states, in particular through the comprehensive policy review process (ibid.). While UNDG was established as part of a larger Secretariat reform package as Kofi Annan took office as Secretary-General in 1997, it was only integrated into the CEB structure in 2008. Initially, this step led to some friction and overlap before an agreement on the appropriate division of labour between the three committees and appropriate support structures[26] could be reached.

In recognition of UNDP's role in managing the RC system on behalf of the entire system, the Administrator of UNDP has been granted the chairmanship of UNDG, reporting directly to the Secretary-General and the CEB. On a rotational basis, the head of agency of one of the specialised agencies serves as the UNDG vice chairman. A measure like this aims to give assur-

25 Besides the UNDG, the High-level Committee on Programme (HLCP) and the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) report to the CEB as well. Whereas the UNDG caters for the coordination of operational activities at the country level, the HLCP promotes *"global policy coherence, including the development of common policy tools, including toolkits, in addition to its work on global policy and programme issues and global public goods"*; and the HLCM works for the *"harmonization of business practices across the system, including general management issues, thus ensuring overall management coherence from global to country level"*; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=591 (accessed 9 July 2012).

26 The UNDG receives secretarial support from the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO). According to its self-description on the UNDG webpage, DOCO *"focuses on supporting and strengthening the Resident Coordinator system with funding, policy guidance and training. DOCO advises RCs on how to make country programmes more efficient, effective and aligned with national priorities, and work to streamline coordination mechanisms."* The Office is also responsible for the administration of the UN Country Coordination Fund (UNCCF), which provides RCs with resources for coordination activities. Finally, it provides technical support to UNDG and the CEB in developing policies, guidelines procedures and decisions for more effective country-level operations; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=15 (accessed 10 July 2012).

Figure 2: Global-level coordination framework



Source: own compilation

ances and voice to the specialised agencies as a key stakeholder group within UNDG. Table 1 contains a list of the current members of UNDG. It could be assumed that UNDG membership is synonymous with being part of the UN development system per the Secretariat's definition; however, this is not the case, as some of the members of UNDG are not included in the definition of the Secretariat's definition of the UN development system, and vice versa.27 Such complications are the reason for why the debate about the specific composition of the UN development system persists (Hill 2010, 1).

According to the UNDG Statement of Purpose approved during the course of its integration under the CEB, the group sees its primary objective in *"co-ordinate(ing) the approach to operational activities at the country level"*[28] through work in three areas:

(i) development of policies, guidelines and procedures to ensure the continued effectiveness of the UN system at country level;

(ii) development of policies and procedures for the management of the RC system; and

(iii) provision of guidance to the UNDP Administrator in his / her role as the manager of the RC system (ibid.)

UNDG works through various inter-agency working groups on specific issues, including the "Resident Coordinator System Issues Working Group" chaired (currently) by the Deputy Director of UNAIDS as the Director of UNIDO's New York office. Given a combined portfolio for operational activities for development worth US$ 15.5 billion (2010), UNDG is the key element for UN aid coordination at the global level.

While UNDG had acquired a reputation for decisive action and decision-making, in particular during its early years, as of late its reputation has been tarnished through an imprudent approach towards its evolving purpose, membership and working methods. Since 1997, UNDG has under-

27 Cf. footnote 2 as well as the list of agencies in the UN development system in the Annex. Whereas a number of specialised agencies as well as research and training institutions that have operational activities are not (yet) represented in UNDG, a number of entities from within the UN Secretariat, the regional economic commissions as well as some other entities not covered in the Secretariat's definition of the UN development system are also members of UNDG.

28 UNDG Statement of Purpose, approved by UNDG on 15 June 2008; online: http://www.undg.org/docs/714/Lisa_Statement-of-purpose-UNDG---approved.doc.

Table 1: The 32 Members of the United Nations Development Group				
Funds and Programmes (9)				
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	United Nations Women (UN WOMEN)	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	World Food Programme (WFP)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	
Specialised Agencies				
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
International Labour Organization (ILO)	International Telecommunications Union (ITU)	World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	World Health Organization (WHO)	
UN Secretariat				
Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA)	United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAC)	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries & Small Island Developing Countries (OHRLLS)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)				

continue table 1: The 32 Members of the United Nations Development Group				
Inter-agency and other				
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	Regional Commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA – rotating annually)	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	
Observers				
World Bank	Spokesman for the Secretary-General	Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary-General	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)
Source: own compilation				

gone substantial changes. When the initial proposal of a merger of UNDP with UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP proved impossible, the concept of strong ties between the "big four" agencies with substantial operational activities – which together make up approximately 70 per cent of total funding for operational activities (cf. UNSG 2012a) – was transformed by installing the Executive Committee (ExCom) of UNDG. In addition to budget sizes and a clear focus on operations, the ExCom agencies share a number of other characteristics: being under the direct authority of the Secretary-General, having parallel executive board meetings and relatively little mandate overlap. This qualified them as being UNDG's "core group" and frontrunners in simplifying and harmonising their approaches on the basis of a relatively compatible way of doing business.[29]

The executive approach towards global aid coordination, in concert with a limited but clear-cut mandate of developing coordination mechanisms, processes and tools aimed at ensuring the complementarity of operations, were key factors for the relative success of UNDG, which only lasted a few years,

29 The *"harmonized approach to cash-transfers to implementing partners"* or the establishment of single UN Houses are only some examples of efforts by the ExCom agencies to streamline their operations.

however. In a *par excellence* case of "good intentions, bad outcomes", other UN funds, programmes and agencies took notice and, stipulated by their donors, started applying for membership of UNDG, which quickly grew to the 32 entities and five observers (cf. Table 1) represented today.[30] While this larger "sounding board" for aid coordination was initially welcomed, what proved far more damaging was the eventual creation[31] of a second, more inclusive forum called the UNDG Advisory Group,[32] which was tasked with preparing the grounds for major decisions, sidelining the ExCom in the process. As a result, larger entities felt that UNDG had been "taken over" by the smaller entities (Lindores 2012, 9). One interviewee offered a similar assessment, noting that since the creation of the advisory board in 2008, *"no important decision has been taken by UNDG since."* In a sense, UNDG seems to have fallen victim to its own success.

Following from the analysis, at least three limitations to the effectiveness of UNDG in providing support to country-level aid coordination and the RC system can be identified.

- First, the clear and focussed purpose of the "executive" UNDG in harmonising and simplifying the operational approaches of those (few) agencies with substantial operations has been diluted. With UNDG now having taken on the role of inter-agency policy-making organ within the UN development system – negotiating, for example, the standard terms of reference for RCs, but also terms for technical advice in middle-income countries – there is a clear incentive (and, from the perspective of any individual entity, furthermore a responsibility) for all funds, programmes and agencies of the UN development system to take part in the decision-making process. While the broadening of UNDG's objectives responds to the need within the UN development system for an

30 UNDG has never engaged in a strategic approach towards membership. Instead, membership is being decided on an ad-hoc basis through an agency request (Browne 2011, 62). As a result, membership has grown from 25 to 32 entities during the period of 2008–2012.

31 Compare letter by UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis, 30 May 2008; online: http://www.undg.org/docs/9526/UNDG_AG_compostion.pdf.

32 The members of the UNDG Advisory Group are FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women, WFP and WHO (all non-rotational), as well as rotational members (one each from the three groups: 1) UNAIDS OHCHR, UN Women and UNODC; 2) DESA, UNEP, UNCTAD and UN-HABITAT; 3) five regional economic commissions).

all-encompassing approach, it has come at the cost of limiting effective functioning of (more limited) operational harmonisation.

- Second, there are various limitations arising from UNDG's membership composition. UNDG membership has experienced uncontrolled enlargement due to the absence of clear membership criteria and a strategic concept. While *"most of the coordination tools were designed for a limited number of 3-5 agencies maximum,"*[33] the drive towards inclusiveness has been carried forward to the country level as well, and increased transaction costs as a result, as evidenced by the UNDAF or Common Country Assessment processes. On the other hand, UNDG membership is not aligned with the CEB and the UN development system definition, which causes further friction, as tensions arise in situations where UN entities are affected by UNDG decisions despite not having had their voices represented during the negotiation stage (a fact that, in particular, the humanitarian actors criticise, as they are closely connected to the UNDG policy realm).
- Third, the voluntary and consensus-based decision-making process within UNDG frequently results in agreement being possible at the level of least-common denominators only. This ultimately constrains the effectiveness of UNDG's operational guidance for country-level coordination and the management of the RC system. Close aid coordination between the relatively congruent ExCom agencies has hinged on the Secretary-General's authority, which is wanting in the case of the legally independent, specialised agencies and the "semi-independent" (UNSG 2012b, 26) funds and programmes with their separate governing bodies. The head of UNDG has no formal or other authority to enforce decisions, such as on the division of labour between member entities. This constraint becomes most tangible in the CEB, which ultimately and unanimously has to approve all UNDG policies.[34] In the words of one interviewee, the current system is build on *"nothing but good faith.*[35]*"*

33 Personal interviews conducted by the author, December 2012.

34 Letter by the UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis, dated 17 October 2007, to the heads of the specialised agencies FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO and WHO in response to their letter dated 5 October, 2007; online: http://www.undg.org/docs/8021/letter_from_KD_in_response_to_SAs.pdf.

35 Personal interviews conducted by the author, September 2012.

The coordination machinery carries on at the level of the individual UN entities as well. As independent international organisations, each of the 14 specialised agencies has a governing board, as do most of the funds and programmes.[36] It is these governing boards that the employees, country representatives and agency directors are "vertically" accountable for, which is why instituting "system-wide", and thus "horizontal", processes and procedures within the UN development system is so challenging.

Between the policy-focussed level of headquarters and the operational country level, there is also the regional level of the six "UNDG regional teams".[37] Chaired by UNDP regional directors, which is a position graded at the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level, the UNDG regional teams represent an intermediary organisational level – on the one hand they provide technical support to the RCs and the United Nations Country Teams, and on the other they are responsible for appraising RC and UNCT performance. The existence of the regional level coordination structure responds largely to the institutional setup of the specialised agencies, which generally have had regional structures, whereas the funds and programmes generally have not. For historical reasons, definitions of regions have differed across entities, and the members of the regional teams are typically scattered across different countries.

The UNDG regional structure is therefore illustrative of the challenge within the UN development system more generally: against the background of a long historical legacy and initially designed to suit the needs of individual entities, global aid-coordination mechanisms evolved within a landscape that is anything but a "tabula rasa": it is characterised by special interests, historical structures and peculiar legacies that each have to be accommodated. Moreover, and most crucially, there is no single authority to draw the numerous agencies, funds and programmes together, which makes participation in coordination voluntary, and decision-making consensus-based. As a result, aid-coordination structures at the global level are complex and rather "weak", in the sense that they preserve entity independence, instead

36 One peculiarity is that UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP conduct joint meetings of their boards.

37 These are 1. eastern and southern Africa; 2. western-central Africa; 3. Arab states; 4. Asia and the Pacific; 5. Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; and 6. Latin America and the Caribbean.

of forging compromise. The next chapter analyses the organisational setup at the country level.

3.3 UN aid coordination at the country level

Given weak organisational structures at the global level, expectations and hopes among UN member states and stakeholders seem to be focussed on the country level. A statement by Gert Rosenthal, a former Under-Secretary-General (USG) at the UN, and for many years the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN, may illustrate this point: *"By far the most effective coordination that can take place between the different specialized agencies and programs in fact takes place at the country level"* (Rosenthal 2005, 38). All interviewees attested to this fact as well, noting, for example: *"It is at the country-level where UN aid coordination is essential and makes a difference."*[38] This chapter presents an overview and initial assessment of the structures.

To an extent, the organisational setup for UN aid coordination at the country level mirrors that at the global level. Along this line, the UNCT can be seen as UNDG's counterpart at the country level (Vatterodt 2008, 15). As the inter-agency fora for aid coordination, the UNCTs are the "nuts and bolts" of each UN country-level presence. Each UNCT, as a group, encompasses all the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition in any given partner country. Representation within the UNCT meetings is generally at the level of the highest representatives of the agencies with a country office. The views of other so-called non-resident agencies are to be represented by the RC. UNCTs exist in more than 130 countries worldwide, covering all of the 180 countries where there are UN programmes.[39] Figure 3 below presents an overview of the country-level coordination framework.

As the designated representative of the Secretary-General, the RC has been determined to be the lead coordinator of the UNCT. The specifics of the relationship between the RC and the UNCT are therefore critically important, as they determine the opportunities and limitations of the RC system.

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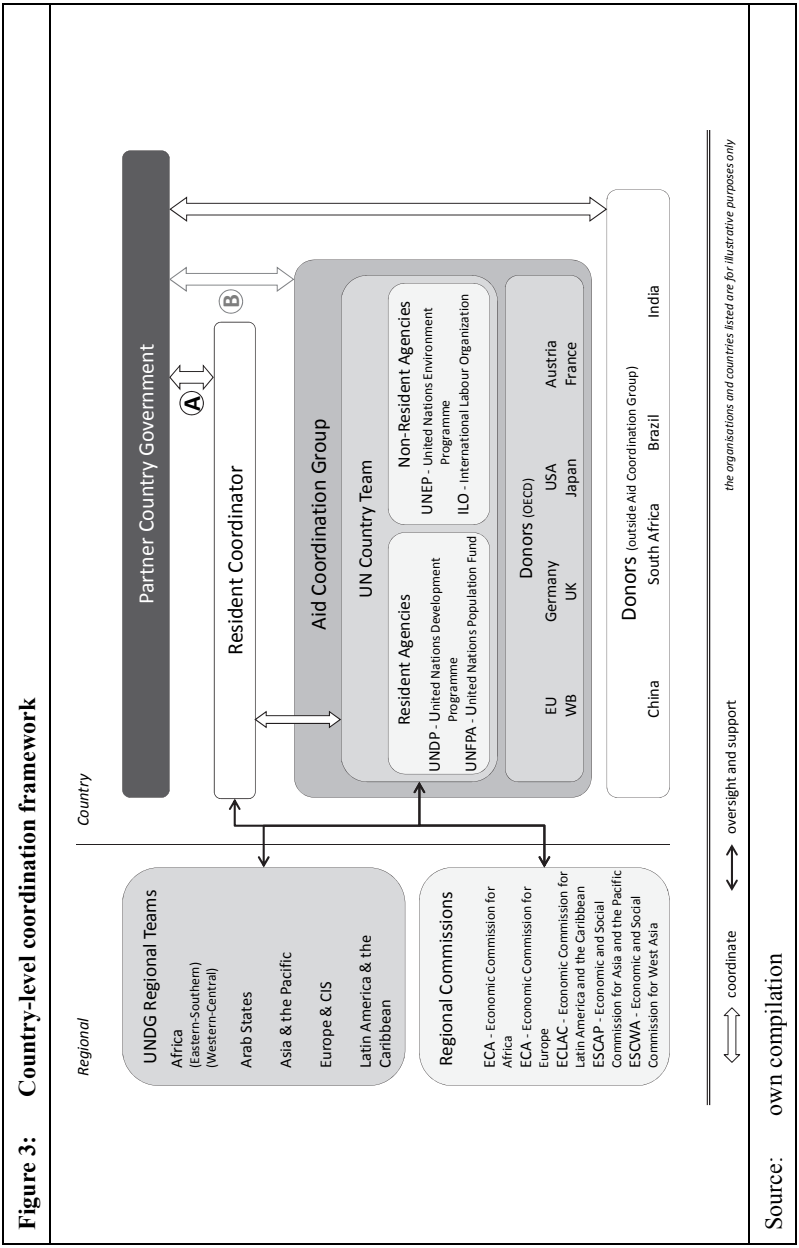
38 Personal interviews conducted by the author, October 2012.

39 Information retrieved from the UNDG webpage; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1257 (accessed 10 July 2012).

Figure 3: Country-level coordination framework



Source: own compilation

Through the Triennial / Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR / QCPR) resolutions, UN member states have been closely involved in setting the parameters for the functioning of the RC system. Accordingly, the TCPR resolutions (UN 2008, 13) established the following three principles:

- The RC system is to be owned by the UN development system as a whole.
- Its functioning should be "participatory, collegial and accountable".
- With the management of the RC system to be firmly anchored in UNDP.

These principles were spelt out in further detail in two documents that are of fundamental importance for the functioning of the RC system. These are, first, the "Guidance Note" (UNDG 2009a) on RC and UNCT relations, and second, the "Management and Accountability System"[40] (UNDG 2008b) for the RC system.

The Guidance Note represents a coordination agreement for the purpose of clarifying the working relations between the coordinator and the coordinated. According to the agreement, the Resident Coordinator should eventually have *"an equal relationship with, and responsibility to, all UNCT member agencies"*; should be *"empowered by clear recognition by each Agency of his / her role in strategically positioning the UN in each country"*; and *"be supported, as required, with access to agencies' technical resources as agreed with the agencies Representatives balancing available resources with tasks to be performed."*

Given the centrality of the relationship between the RC and the UNCT for the functioning of aid coordination, the Guidance Note has only marginally contributed to resolving the conflicts and challenges that have been plaguing the RC system for a long time. In particular, the persistent challenges are:

- Unbinding and noncommittal agreement: the Guidance Note is not a formal and authoritative agreement in the regular sense. What it contains is an "overall long-term vision", which demotes the relationship between the RC and the UNCT to a rather informal association that is lacking specificity and institutionalised form.

40 The full title is as follows: "Management and Accountability System of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System including the 'functional firewall' for the RC System" (UNDG 2008b). The Management and Accountability System is analysed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

- Voluntary and informal relationship: the Guidance Note neither gives the RC any formal authority over the members of the UNCT, nor any means to coordinate their programmes during the implementation phase. It moreover remains vague about the mutual responsibilities. All UNCT members continue to have direct line accountability to their own organisations, and only "collegial accountability" to the RC and rest of the UNCT for producing common results. The Guidance Note also gives assurances to all stakeholders that it will *"not prejudice their relationship with their own agency"* (UNDG 2009a, 4).
- Unaligned incentive structure: the underlying incentive structure of the UN entities has not been aligned consistently with the new arrangements introduced through the MAS. The management system is overly complex and accountability diffused. Fundamentally, the line accountability of UNCT members continues to be vertically structured (i.e. to their individual agencies) instead of being accountable for their performance to the RC. With the MAS, all agencies in principle agreed that they would recognise the RC's role in the job description of their agency heads, but implementation of this proposition has been lacking (Lindores 2012).
- Role conflicts: the complex structure of the MAS implies role-conflicts for the RCs, who continue to be UNDP staff. Resident Representatives (RRs) who serve as RCs continue to be held accountable for the results of UNDP as a whole in their personal performance appraisals, alongside being accountable to the regional UNDG team for their performance as RCs. The RCs themselves are funded from UNDP core contributions. As a result, the fundamental conflict persists of a coordination function "belonging to all" but being managed by one entity. Efforts are underway to broaden the pool of applicants for RC positions to candidates outside UNDP. In principle, applicants for an RC position can come from all UN agencies as well as from outside of the UN, but in reality the majority of them continue to be from UNDP. While these efforts are a practical measure to turn the claim that the RC system belongs to the system as a whole into reality, this may also lead to new dimensions of role conflicts as a result.
- Lack of external awareness of separation of roles: Being the result of a compromise internal to the UN, there is also little to no understanding among host countries or within the country donor group about the separation of functions between the Resident Representative function

of UNDP and the internal division of labour within the UNPD. Without recognition, however, perceptions of conflicting interests persevere. RCs continue to serve as the Resident Representatives of UNDP, and in that function continue to be called upon to deal with internal UNDP affairs (UNSG 2011, 16). The situation is further complicated by the fact that no separate diplomatic accreditation of the RC exists with the host government.

- Limiting agency support from UNDP: the firewall may also have weakened the RC system by limiting the linkage to UNDP, which constitutes a major source of support for the RC system (UNSG 2011, 19). As manager of the RC system, UNDP provided US$ 92 million of its core budget funds as operational support to the RCs / RRs (UNSG 2008b).

In conclusion, both global as well as country-level aid-coordination frameworks can be characterised as complex, involving ambiguous roles and responsibilities, and diffused accountability. At the same time, it becomes clear that the challenges inherent in the RC system management as well as within the relationship between the RC and the UNCT at the country level have clearly been recognised by UNDP, UNDG and member states alike. UNDG has made comprehensive attempts towards formalising the RC-UNCT relationship, as well as towards ridding the governance structure of the RC system of its inherent conflicts of interest. However, given the high hopes placed upon country-level aid coordination, the existing institutional and organisational setup can only partially meet these expectations.

3.4 Primus inter pares? UNDP and the management of the RC system

> [T]*he procedures and processes proposed...could only be implemented if (among other things) the development activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system are coordinated to the maximum extent possible by a central body, through which the greatest amount possible of technical cooperation funds made available should be channeled....It should be accepted that UNDP provides the best foundation on which a coordinating organization could be based.* – Jackson Report (UNDP 1969, II, 148 ff.)

A crucial aspect of the relationship between the coordinator and those being coordinated is how the coordinator's leadership role is being perceived by

them. In the case of the RC and UNCT members, this is particularly relevant since, as it has been shown, their relationship is principally based on the voluntary commitment towards coordination by the heads of the UN entities within the UNCT. Most interviewees stressed that without formal authority, RCs generally have to resort to personal leadership and the reputational clout of the RC position in cultivating – or in the hopes of cultivating – recognition and allegiance within the UNCT and outside.[41] Giving this context, it would be seen as necessary for the management of the aid-coordination function, including the RC system, to be situated in a neutral position in order to be – and be seen to be – devoid of any conflicting interests.

Per UN member state guidance, the Administrator of UNDP is responsible for the management of the RC system and the RC system *"is firmly anchored within the UNDP"* (UN 2008, 14). That each RC is therefore employed through a contract with UNDP is one of the practical implications of this mandate. However, in terms of overall financial contributions, UNDP is also the single-largest agency within the UN development system, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all funding for operational activities for development, and one-third if humanitarian assistance is excluded (UNSG 2012a, 16, 23). Fulfilling both its system-wide coordination function, as well as tending to its agency interests as part of the UN development system, is a tightrope walk (Leininger / Weinlich 2012, 239). Against this background, as will be shown, there are thus questions about UNDP's ability to adequately serve its role as the manager of the RC system, which, by another of its fundamental principles, should be *"owned by the United Nations development system as a whole."*[42] The issue has also been picked up by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), which, as an independent oversight body of the UN system, observed: *"The dual role of UNDP as broker in operational activities and coordinator / advocate of the United Nations family has the potential for conflict of interests*" (JIU 2009, 12). The existence of these two conflicting roles of UNDP have long been recognised (cf. Klingebiel 1999, 132; Browne 2011; Weinlich 2011a, 34), including by Mark Malloch Brown, who, as a former Administrator of UNDP, confirmed *"long-running institutional tensions between UNDP's role as co-ordinator of the UN system and as development agency in its own right."*[43]

41 Personal interviews conducted by the author, October 2012.

42 UNGA (2008b); Resolution 62/208.

43 Quoted in Browne (2011, back cover).

In their essence, then, ongoing debates about the management of the RC system principally relate to the question of whether the RC – in addition to his system-wide functions – is also acting as the UNDP Resident Representative, or the other way around. Debates about this sensitive matter tended to be characterised by fundamentally opposed perspectives on whether neutrality could be maintained continuously, questioning in particular the system-wide orientation and allegiance of RCs as UNDP employees (*"RC system as a UNDP puppet"*[44]). At the same time, several interviewees also attested to the fact that, in practice, most RCs, aware of the heightened attention surrounding the matter, have generally been taking great pains – such as moving into office facilities separate from UNDP's, etc. – so as to not compromise their status in any way. Several interviewees also suggested that the debate might also have a political economy aspect to it, essentially serving as an obstruction and an *"excuse for the unwilling not to be coordinated."*[45]

From an historical perspective, however, UNDP's management of the RC system has not always been contested to this extent. During its early years, UNDP served the role of central funding agency and service provider for the UN development system (Leininger / Weinlich 2012, 233; Browne 2011, 61; cf. also Section 4.1). Moreover, for more than two decades of its early existence, UNDP not only funded and coordinated the UN development system, but also led the evaluation function of the aid programmes of its peers in the funds and programmes (Yoder 1997, 147). Over time, however, this role slowly changed and UNDP started to become *"more 'programme' than 'fund'"* (Browne 2011, 27). The establishment of what later evolved into the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was a crucial, but not the only step in this prolonged process of institutional redefinition and evolution. More and more, UNDP embodied a "primus inter pares" among the funds, programmes and agencies that constitute the UN development system, with its independent role as manager of the UN development system becoming increasingly compromised as a result.

In 1977, in an early attempt to rectify the RC management question, at the request of the General Assembly,[46] the Secretary-General created a new senior-level position charged with ensuring a coherent, coordinated and effi-

44 Personal interviews conducted by the author, October 2012.

45 Personal interview conducted by the author, October 2012.

46 UNGA (1977); Resolution 32/197.

cient management of all operational activities. Acting under the authority of the SG, this position of Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation ("DG Development") was not only significant because of its ambitious mandate, but more specifically because it effectively constituted an attempt to switch the aid-coordination management over to the Secretariat and the Secretary-General (cf. Browne 2011, 33). The attempt, however, ultimately proved unsuccessful and the position was again abandoned in 1992.[47] According to Browne (Browne 2011, 61), one of the reasons why the mechanism failed was because it was not in line with the hierarchically structured UN development system. According to this interpretation, what provoked the lack of authority was that the DG was established at the level of the Under-Secretary-General only, thus placing it at the same level as some of the heads of agencies it was supposed to coordinate.[48] More broadly, it has to be acknowledged that the Secretariat, through various offices and subordinate entities, is a member of UNDG and, at least historically, has also been engaged in operational activities,[49] which raises questions about its suitability as well.

The latest attempt to bring more clarity to the aid-coordination function within the UN development system and the governance of the RC system occurred in 2006, when the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence recommended that UNDP withdraw from all operational activities in order to focus on strengthening coherence and fulfilling its coordination role (UN 2006, 24). However, this proposal faced strong resistance, in particular from UNDP itself, but a number of developing countries also rejected any efforts to consolidate and rationalise the UN

47 One of the more lasting impacts that the DG for Development had on the UN development system were the "comprehensive policy review" (now QCPR) resolutions established by the office that have since become the main instrument for policy guidance for the UN development system.

48 According to the unofficial hierarchical rules, the UNDP Administrator is the UN system's third-highest-ranking official. Formally at the rank of an Under-Secretary-General, seniority of the Administrator among the group of his peer USGs (approx. 50) is established by the fact that the Associate Administrator (i.e. the USG's deputy) is also at the rank of USG, and there are several more Assistant-Secretary-General (ASG) positions within the organisation (cf. Browne 2011, 61). USGs have diplomatic rank equivalent to a national cabinet minister.

49 Compare Sahlmann (1987, 95), who reports that in the 1980s, the UN Secretariat was being used as an implementer for programmes and activities designed and financed by some of the specialised agencies.

development system, which they saw as attempts to reinforce the role of the Bretton Woods institutions by confining the role of the UN development system to "niche issues". Accordingly, UNDP has been able to retain its two-tiered mandate in operations as well as coordination.

Mindful of the mounting criticism questioning the independence of UNDP in the management of the RC system and following a lengthy negotiation process, UNDP responded by introducing in 2008 a "functional firewall" that aimed to separate the agency-specific operational activities from the system-wide coordination function. The firewall itself was part of a more comprehensive reform of the management of the RC system, which also outlined the respective accountability lines of all the stakeholders and other organisational matters. The main elements of the so-called Management and Accountability Framework are:

- designation of a UNDP country director or deputy RR to represent the agency interest within the UNCT alongside the other heads of agencies;[50]
- functional separation of tasks between the RC and the UNDP country director or deputy RR that removes the RC from operational responsibilities within UNDP to avoid conflicts of interest;
- re-alignment of accountability lines for the separated functions, and specification of accountability for the elements of the global and country-level aid-coordination machinery consisting of the RC, the UNDP country director, the UNCT, regional UNDG teams, UNDG, DOCO, etc.

The introduction of the "functional firewall" as an incremental and consensus-oriented measure was instrumental in momentarily thwarting more radical proposals, including a transfer of the management function to the Secretariat. Upon the resolution to appoint UNDP country directors, the former Administrator Mark Malloch Brown expressed his hope that "[t]*his will allow the RCs to focus on their UN coordination functions and relieve the perception that the RC cannot both serve UNDP and the broader sys-*

50 By January 2011, UNDP had appointed country-director positions in 51 countries (UNSG 2011, 16). In the remaining countries, the RC would have to delegate his UNDP-specific responsibilities to a Deputy Resident Representative. However, in a number of particularly smaller countries, neither position exists (Lindores 2012, 43).

tem."[51] To an extent, the measures of the MAS indeed seemed to have deflected some of the criticism levelled against UNDP. To a large extent, what remains, however, is the full implementation of the MAS by other members of the UNCT (UNSG 2012b), including through mutual (i.e. UNCT to RC and vice versa) accountability.[52] However, even with a country director appointed, the firewall between the RR and the RC functions drawn up, and responsibility for the day-to-day management of UNDP programmes delegated to the country director, the fact remains that the RC as the UNDP RR continues to have full fiduciary responsibility for the management of UNDP programmes, and accreditation with the government rests with the RR – as the RC is a function, but not a legal entity. As a consequence, the firewall ultimately has to remain a limited delineation. Perceptions of inherent conflict of interests could only be dispelled through applied practice, instead of conceptual clarity. As one interviewee remarked: "[Y]*ou cannot be completely purist about MAS, there will always be minor challenges*."(ibid.) Given that the MAS has only very recently been established, several interviewees stressed the fact that implementation takes time, and that any conclusions on the functioning of the MAS at the current point in time would be premature.

Tensions over the management of the field coordination function within the UN system are not new and can be seen as part of a longstanding debate about where to anchor the management of the RC system. Historically, discussions have tended to oscillate between UNDP on the one hand, and the UN Secretary-General and, by extension, the UN Secretariat on the other. Based on the analysis of conceptual proposals and historical practice, four principal options can be distinguished.

1. Option one resembles the "status quo", characterised by preserving the two-tiered mandate of UNDP, combined with the "functional firewall" and a full implementation of the MAS.

2. A second option, which could be labelled the "system-wide coherence" option, builds on the first option, but modifies it in line with the suggestions by the High-Level Panel of experts of 2006. Following this model, UNDP would continue to be grounded in operations that, however, would be concentrated in those areas where there is a *"void to be*

51 Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board, 25 January 2005, New York; online: http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2005/january/mmb-undp-executive-board.en?categoryID=593045&lang=en (accessed 17 Dec. 2012).

52 Personal interviews conducted by the author, October–December 2012.

filled"[53] in the UN development system – in particular, but not limited to, the areas of governance, crisis-prevention and poverty-eradication – so as to avoid any compromise of its coordination mandate.

3. A third option would see the management of the RC system be anchored *again* – as was the case during the early years after the establishment of the RC system – directly under the authority of the Secretary-General. Depending on the specific vision for the RC mandate, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) or the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General could be possible hosts.
4. Finally, a fourth option that has been raised in the past envisions the establishment of a completely independent – of the agencies, funds and programmes, but also the Secretariat – new entity within the UN system to which the function of managing the RC system would be transferred. A transformation of UNDP – by reinforcing its system-wide coordination mandate, divesting it of all operations and embedding it within a new governance framework – would be a variant of this option.

4 Country-level aid coordination through the Resident Coordinator

Having covered the organisational setup and the global and country-level aid-coordination framework as the important determinants for the functioning of the RC system, this chapter focusses on the characteristics of the RC system in past and present practice. The first section – based on the assumption that historical legacies and path dependencies over time are crucial factors in understanding current functioning – focusses on the evolution of the RC system. Indeed many of the current characteristics of the RC system can only be understood in their historical contexts. The perspective is then broadened beyond the immediate realm of the RC system by focussing on three defining dimensions of the RC system-orientation in the next chapter, which are a) the internal dimension, b) the external dimension and c) aid coordination with the partner country. First and foremost is the internal dimension of UN aid coordination. Against this background, the final section in this chapter reviews the current role and mandate of the RC at the country

53 Personal interview conducted by the author, December 2012.

level, which has significantly evolved over time. Together, the analysis of the "standard model" of the RC functioning in current practice forms the basis for an assessment of the major divergences of that model that can be identified in Chapter 5.

4.1 Evolution of the Resident Coordinator system

The RC system, as it is today, is the product of an evolutionary process of institutional development whose initial roots can be traced back more than five decades to the early 1950s. The development of the RC system was never straightforward, planned or linear, but rather incremental, adaptive to context and circumstances, and constantly in flux as a result of continuous impulses from within and outside the UN development system. It has seen numerous iterations, about-faces, progress and setbacks. Understanding the origins and evolution of the RC system offers important insights for current debates about its future role and functioning.

The chapter focusses particularly on six dimensions of the RC system that are deemed crucial for its understanding. These are: a) the governance mechanism, b) the management function, c) the organisational setup at the country level (i.e. the relationship between the RC and the UNCT), d) the mandate, e) its capacity and resource endowment and f) the instruments at the disposal of the RC. In a somewhat simplifying approach – and based upon a demarcation of key steps and events that were deemed crucial in the evolution of the RC system – five different stages of development in the evolution of the RC system are distinguished.

4.1.1 The origins of UN country-level aid coordination (1950–1969)

The evolution of the UN country-level representation is closely related to a more fundamental challenge in the field of development, namely what constitutes an appropriate procedure for the allocation of aid (Stokke 2009, 55 ff.; Browne 2011, 12 ff.). When the UN development system first started the provision of technical assistance (TA), it was through a central-level funding mechanism fed by voluntary contributions from member states called the Extended Programme for Technical Assistance (EPTA). As early as 1950, EPTA – which later evolved into UNDP – first started the practice

of dispatching representatives to programme countries, thereby pioneering the concept of field representation, which at the time was quite novel. The primary intention was to ensure that partner-country views about the technical assistance that the UN development system delivered would become more important in the allocation of aid. However, contrary to this idea, the initial setup in EPTA guaranteed set shares of the available central funds to the (then) nine specialised agencies plus the UN Secretariat for the implementation of TA programmes (Browne 2011, 10), thereby rather emphasising the supply side of the equation through programming at the level of headquarters. This operational model was not without its drawbacks; indeed, the coordination challenges for partner countries associated with TA originating from various sources within the UN development system eventually gained recognition by ECOSOC[54] and provided an impetus for a strengthened country-level allocation mechanism relying on the Resident Representatives as key intermediaries. As a result, in 1958 there were already 45 Resident Representatives in partner countries working towards "country-driven programming",[55] which some saw as a "UN diplomatic service" in the making (Stokke 2009, 67). In recognition of the initiative, ECOSOC adopted a resolution in 1960[56] that requested the Secretary-General and invited the specialised agencies:

> *to continue to make full use of the Resident Representatives and to accord them adequate authority, in co-operation with the Governments to which they are accredited, in coordinating the development and execution of programmes of assistance, whether financed from voluntary funds or from the regular budget of their organizations* […].

This resolution constitutes the original mandate for country-level aid coordination assigned to the EPTA Resident Representatives (who were later to become the UNDP representatives) covering the funds and programmes, and the specialised agencies upon their consent; the later a feature that persists to this day. The establishment of UNDP[57] through a merger of the EPTA and

54 ECOSOC (1961), Resolution 856 XXXII.

55 To ensure that programmes were truly reflective of the demands of partner governments, they were expected to contribute to any new programme, including financially. The idea of "free" TA, which has repeatedly been identified as a major source of distortions and wrong incentives on all sides of the aid relation (cf. e.g. Messner / Faust 2007), only evolved later in the 1960s and 1970s (Browne 2011, 3).

56 ECOSOC (1960), Resolution 795(XXX).

57 ECOSOC (1965), Resolution 2029 (XX).

the Special Fund, which had been established in 1959, marked another step in the evolution of the UN country-level presence. While the management of the field representatives remained with the newly established UNDP, it was never uncontested, as evidenced in an ECOSOC resolution as early as 1967, which raised the need *"for further clarification of the central role and responsibility of the Resident Representatives in co-ordinating the technical co-operation programmes of the United Nations system organizations at the field level."*[58]

The early phase in the evolution of the UN country-level coordination system was therefore characterised by a limited formal mandate for the EPTA and later UNDP Resident Representatives in aid coordination, which was, however, to a large extent balanced by the fact that the agencies' authority – and by extension, that of its representatives – was boosted through the centralised command over systemic funding. While many of the programming and other instruments at the hand of the country representatives were to be developed only later, the principal norms for UN development cooperation (such as the principle of demand-driven TA), on the other hand, were developed during this period (cf. Stokke 2009, 43–82).

4.1.2 Growing discontent with the UN development system (1969–1977)

At the end of the 1960s, which also coincided with the end of the first UN development decade, calls for a more fundamental reflection on the structure and workings of the operational activities for development became widespread, including country-level aid coordination as a crucial element. UNDP and Paul Hoffmann – its Administrator at the time – have to be given credit for commissioning the "Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System"[59] in response. Its reform proposals were fundamental and far-reaching, envisioning a UN engagement that was much more driven by partner-country preferences served through integrated country programmes under the management of empowered UNDP Resident Representatives. Reception of the Capacity Study was mixed, however, with resistance in

58 ECOSOC (1967), Resolution 1262 (XLIII), quoted in Stokke (2009, 189).

59 More informally known as the "Capacity Study" or the "Jackson Report" after its principal author, Robert Jackson.

particular emanating from the specialised agencies, which stood to lose their set funding allocations (Murphy 2006, 140 ff.). Member states were equally divided, but they eventually agreed to implement parts of the proposed reforms through the so-called Consensus Resolution.[60] While it fell short of expectations and restructuring efforts required for a fundamentally revamped engagement, it did strengthen country ownership of UN activities through 3–5 year "Country Programmes" corresponding to medium-term indicative funding envelopes for each country. Some of the most far-reaching implications of the resolution concerned the Resident Representatives,[61] which were significantly strengthened by giving them the mandate to:

- coordinate all UN organisations at country level as the "leader of the team",[62] including through reporting requirements for all implementing agencies to the Resident Representative;
- appraise all projects under country programming;
- have delegated authority through the UNDP Administrator for the approval of project.

Despite these notable reorganisations and reforms, the longer-term impact of the Consensus Resolution in terms of strengthening country-level aid coordination ultimately remained limited (Stokke 2009, 247; Murphy 2006, 14 ff.). In hindsight, one of the central reasons for this was that the set of measures effectively decentralised the aid-allocation process from New York to the field level. While in principle this had the positive effect of strengthening the voice of partner countries as well as the role of the Resident Representatives in linking them with the engagement of the UN development system, as a consequence of the changes, the previous dependency of the specialised agencies on UNDP funding allocations was loosened. Increasingly determined to push their bilateral agendas and exhibit more concerns for agency efficiency at the expense of effectiveness considerations, donors started to task the different entities of the UN development system – including UNDP itself – with the implementation of their projects directly in the following years; a trend that UNDP reinforced through the establishment of UNOPS and other measures. The fact that the oversight over UNDP's own

60 UNGA (1970), Resolution 2688 (XXV).

61 As a clear sign of the changed function of the RR, the name was changed to "Resident Directors", which however was not maintained and subsequently reversed again.

62 UNGA (1970), Resolution 2688 (XXV), para. 63.

operational activities was added to the mandate of the Resident Representatives[63] further undermined its neutral role as UN development system coordinator. While this new practice facilitated resource mobilisation, it also stipulated agency competition.

Against this background, it has been argued that the Consensus Resolution has *"paradoxically contributed to the erosion of the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP"* (Nordic UN Project 1991, 163). In hindsight, the Consensus Resolution, therefore, fell short of its aspirations, as it was not able to resolve the contradiction between the centrifugal and the centripetal forces at the heart of the UN development system. It took eight years for a substantial momentum for reform to build up again, during which the autonomy of the executing agencies, funds and programmes – at the expense of systemic coherence – continued to grow. Additionally, the scope of activities of the World Bank expanded significantly during this period, which put further external pressure on the UN development system. Finally, the funding crisis of 1975 demonstrated the incongruity between multi-year programming and a voluntary funding mechanism, which also had a damaging effect on country programming as one of the central instruments at the hand of the Resident Representatives.

In retrospect, the high hopes associated with the ambitious reform proposals of the Jackson Report did not materialise. The role and responsibilities of the Resident Representatives in principle were strengthened; however, this went hand in hand with their actual weakening through the growing autonomy of the executing agencies, funds and programmes. The aid-coordination mandate continued to rest with UNDP, but given its own operational engagement, this leadership role was no longer above reproach. The country-programming instrument was promising, but ultimately it proved ineffective to overcome the diverging agencies guarding their relationships with individual ministries in the field.

4.1.3 A period of stagnation (1977–1997)

Resolution 32/197[64] of the General Assembly was widely noted as the origin of the proposal to establish a Director-General for Development and

63 Ibid., para. 56.

64 UNGA (1977); Resolution 32/197.

International Economic Co-operation (DG DIEC), which, in the spirit of the "new international economic order", aimed at bringing about a more coherent UN development system at the global level. The resolution was the rather limited outcome of a process that started four years earlier when the General Assembly set up an ad-hoc committee of experts on the restructuring of ECOSOC. However, it also included an extended chapter on the operational activities for development. It is these propositions – initially strongly resisted by some of the specialised agencies – that are responsible for the creation of the RC system as it exists today, namely, as a principally separate and independent function from that of the UNDP Resident Representatives. The key paragraph reads:

> *On behalf of the United Nations system, over-all responsibility for, and co-ordination of, operational activities for development carried out at the country-level should be entrusted to a single official to be designated taking into account the sectors of particular interest to the country of assignment, in consultation with and with the consent of the Government concerned, who should exercise team leadership and be responsible for evolving, at the country-level, a multi-disciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes.*[65]

The resolution thus departed from previous policy in a number of ways: the first and most obvious change was that the coordination function was, for the first time, established as a position in its own right (*"single official to be designated"*). With this measure, the General Assembly reconciled the coordination function and requirement with the new realities and roles of UNDP and the other agencies. It was subsequently given the title of "Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system's operational activities for development".[66] The principle that designation of the RCs should take place *"taking into account the sectors of particular interest to the country of assignment"* for the first time also opened up the possibility of entrusting the RC function to UN entities other than UNDP. The UNDP Governing Council initially opposed this measure.[67] While this offered an opportunity to diversify and to increase system-wide ownership as well as to establish the independence of the coordination function, following lengthy negotiations behind the scene

65 Ibid., Annex, para. 34.

66 This was done by decision of the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination, which is the predecessor of the current Chief Executive Board of all the heads of agencies, funds and programmes under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General.

67 ECOSOC (1988), UNDP Governing Council Decision 88/56, para. 1.

the General Assembly two years later specified that "[t]*he UNDP Resident Representative was normally to be designated RC"*.[68] A report by the Secretary-General in 1981 showed this to be almost fully achieved, with RC positions in most countries having been given to the Resident Representatives of UNDP (Browne 2011, 33). Arguably, considerations of continuity and practicality played a key role in the decision in favour of the established UNDP candidates. However, what seemed practical at the time had a lasting impact in the sense that various role-conflicts resulted from this double designation that continue to plague the RC system to this day, even after the "functional firewall" was established in the mid-2000s. Another change of policy, if only nuanced, was that resolution 32/197 altered the wording established in the Consensus Resolution that designated the coordinator as the "leader of the team" to one "exercising team leadership", which to an extent weakens the relationship with the UNCT. Finally, in recognition of the increasingly autonomous activities of the UN entities, the country-programming instrument was recognised as a "frame of reference" for core resources only, thereby excluding the growing share of earmarked funding.

Against this background, resolution 32/197 ultimately did not effectuate the fundamental change that it had hoped to achieve. The authority of the RC never gained full recognition from the other UN entities guarding their independence and autonomy, which becomes evident from ECOSOC resolutions as early as 1981.[69] Fragmentation of the UN development system was further magnified when the regional economic commissions started to become operationally active that same year, which broadened coordination requirements and added to the overall complexity of – as well as overlap within – the UN development system (cf. Browne 2011, 33). The following period was characterised largely by the absence of further momentum to reform the RC system, in consequence also to a lengthier period of decline of UNDP (Murphy 2006, 232) and the development practice ("the lost decade") more generally. A mandate and working arrangement for the country-level relationship between the RC and the other agencies, including UNDP, took time to evolve and overall fell short of the comprehensive mandate – albeit under very different circumstances – that had previously been available to the RR of UNDP. The centrifugal forces at work within the UN development system seemed to have prevailed during the 1980s and 1990s.

68 UNGA (1979); Resolution 34/213, para. 3.

69 ECOSOC (1981); Resolution 1981/59, para. 5.

One of the contributing factors was that UNDP was increasingly unable to fulfil its central funding role and channelled increasingly less funding to the entities of the UN development system (Browne 2011, 44), which resulted in further competition to offset shortfalls. On the other hand, UNDP became increasingly more active in operations itself, which produced mounting criticism of its role in aid coordination.

In conclusion, in terms of progress towards a more effective RC system, lasting contributions were not made during the 1980s and 1990s. The separation of the coordination function improved the clarity of the mandate, but in practice potential benefits were counteracted by "double-hatting" the functions of the Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP. To the extent that double-hatting was seen to compromise the neutrality of the RC, it put a strain on the relationship between the RC and the UNCT. In terms of coordination instruments, no momentous developments were registered during this period. What became clear, however, was that the country-level and UN internal processes seemed much more innovative and ground-breaking than intergovernmental negotiations, to an extent. The evolution of the double-hatting of the RC with the Humanitarian Coordinator – later confirmed as standard practice by the General Assembly[70] – or the Unified UN offices in the Commonwealth of Independent States in the early 1990s are cases in point in this respect.

4.1.4 A coming revival? (1997–2006)

Against the backdrop of the end of the cold war, the beginning of the 1990s heralded much change in the international arena, including within the UN development system. Since the first half of the 1990s, there had been reform measures taken to strengthen the RC system both at the structural and policy levels (Klingebiel 1999, VI), which acknowledged what had been described in an influential report by the Joint Inspection Unit: *"The RC system is considered to be the substantiation and managerial centerpiece of the UN system presence and operations at the country level"* (JIU 1997, 11). The period saw a renewed interest in reform, including of aid-coordination mechanisms, which also benefited from a favourable political climate. Immediately upon taking office, SG Kofi Annan launched a comprehensive

70 UNGA (1993), Resolution A/48/209, para. 4.

reform initiative entitled "Renewing the United Nations – A programme for reform"[71] (1997), which won the General Assembly's endorsements (ibid.) Apart from central-level reforms aimed at strengthening the coherence of the UN development system, achievements included the transformation of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) into the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the consolidation of several entities into UNODC, as well as joint executive committee meetings of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. Under the label of "acting as one at the country level", the report also introduced a number of important changes to the RC system. Specifically the following measures:

- Strengthening the role of the RC as the "leader of the UNCT" through a direct accreditation with the partner government;[72]
- Establishing UN Houses to bring together in one location different agency country-offices;[73]
- Strengthening the management of the RC system through the establishment of UNDG to *"provide a forum for concerted directives to Resident Coordinators"* (cf. Section 3.1);
- Adoption of a Common Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to *"integrate all UN programmes"*.

If the reform package concerned operational and managerial aspects, the Millennium Declaration of 2000 conveyed a sense of common purpose and policy direction to the UN development system. The positive reform momentum was sustained in 2002 with a second comprehensive reform package entitled "Strengthening the United Nations – An Agenda for Further Change",[74] which, unlike the 1997 package, however, also contained more substantial recommendations and therefore required the approval of the

71 UNGA (1997), Resolution A/52/12, para. 153.

72 The report states that: *"funds and programmes and United Nations Information Centres will be part of a single United Nations office under the Resident Coordinator as the designated representative of the Secretary-General and Leader of the United Nations Country Team who would be accredited to the head of government."* It has to be pointed out, however, that legal caveats against the direct accreditation are persistent to this day.

73 After a rapid increase in the early years, their numbers have remained steady more recently. Today, 59 UN Houses exist worldwide (source: UNDG webpage; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=9, accessed 15 Dec. 2012).

74 UNGA (2002); Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, 57/387.

General Assembly, which only materialized in part.[75] In terms of the RC system, one of the positive outcomes was that the RCs in larger and medium-sized countries were given their own staff, which endowed them with a more independent capacity, whereas previously, they had relied on the staff support from UNDP or other agencies.

More fundamentally, in a reversal of previous practice, the "personal union" between the RC and the UNDP Resident Representative that existed in most cases, the 2004 TCPR resolution[76] requested the Secretary-General to a) develop a new management and accountability framework for the governance of the RC system, which was the foundation that eventually led to the establishment of the "functional firewall" in 2008, and b) called for the appointment of UNDP country directors to concentrate on the running of UNDP's day-to-day business. Finally, the resolution established new guiding principles for the RC system (cf. Section 3.3).

The first period in office of SG Annan thus saw a number of managerial and pragmatic changes within the RC system, including some with potentially far-reaching implication, such as the introduction of the functional firewall. The RC's capacity, autonomous of its host agency, was significantly revamped overall, including through the UNDAF instrument and the introduction of a CCA process in 1999. The management of the RC system continued to rest with UNDP during the period, albeit potentially less firmly than previously, as a result of the growing tendency for delinking / demarcation.

4.1.5 Delivering as One and rising expectations (2006 to date)

Similar to the Jackson Report of 1969, the "Delivering as One" report produced by the High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence (SWC) that was appointed by Secretary-General Annan in 2006 has fundamentally influenced discussions on UN reforms. Like its famous predecessor the "Jackson Report", it also illustrates the difficulties of reaching intergovernmental consensus on implementation. Partly owing to bad timing during the change of office between Secretaries-General Annan and Ban Ki-moon, the Gen-

75 UNGA (2003); Resolution A/RES/57/300.

76 UNGA (2005); Resolution A/RES/59/250.

eral Assembly adopted resolutions in 2008[77] and 2010[78] that respond to the report and implement some proposals. According to one assessment, two to three of the 10 major High-Level Panel recommendations have been taken up for implementation (Browne 2011, 134), while others continue to be disregarded.

In taking a very comprehensive approach towards addressing all major dimensions of country-level operations – calling for the UN to "deliver as one" through one programme, budget, leader and office – the panel envisioned the RC as the key building block to deliver on all dimensions. Accordingly, an "empowered RC" was to be given the mandate to negotiate One Country Programmes with partner governments on behalf of the entire UN system; be vested with the corresponding authority to allocate resources from pooled and central funding mechanisms as necessary; as well as be given the power to hold UNCT members accountable to agreed outcomes and compliance with the programme.[79]

Given the potentially ground-breaking nature of the proposals, the intergovernmental negotiations on the SWC report only resulted in the roll-out of a diluted DaO approach on a pilot basis in eight countries in 2006 (see Chapter 5). The pilot initiative included only a "partially empowered RC", as his / her authority in making allocation decisions related to newly established – and relatively small – pooled funds that were set up in support of the pilot initiative. Crucially, they continued to lack any sway over agency-specific funds, which would have been regarded a key element in enforcing a more coordinated provision of aid by the HLP. In a move to strengthen accountability of the RC, a performance appraisal system for the RC through the UNCT members was introduced in 2007,[80] and the TCPR resolution of 2007 introduced a number of other measures, such as the requirement for the UNDAF to be counter-signed by partner government, which (if not legally, at least symbolically) "binds" the participating agencies, funds and programmes to it. Overall, addressing these incremental measures has come at the expense of not dealing with the more fundamental structural and in-

77 UNGA (2008a); Resolution A/RES/62/277.

78 UNGA (2010); Resolution A/RES/64/289.

79 Ibid., para. 17.

80 The appraisal system is called "One80 Performance Appraisal Tool". Detailed information can be found on the UNDG webpage, online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=136 (accessed 6 July 2012).

stitutional challenges of the RC system. Aside from the eight pilot countries that have tested the DaO approach since 2007, the only substantial change that took place during the period was the introduction of a one-sided and non-reciprocal appraisal process of the RC through the UNCT, which modified the relationship between the RC and the UNCT, as well as a broadening of the use of the UNDAF. There were no fundamental changes concerning the RC mandate, governance structure or capacity.

4.1.6 Interim conclusions

Based on the assumption that historical legacies and path dependencies over time are crucial factors in understanding the role and functioning of the RC system as it exists today, this chapter traced its evolution from the early origins in the 1950s to today. Focussing on the key dimensions of the governance and management of the RC system, the organisational setup at the country level, its mandate, capacity as well as instruments at the disposal of the RC, five main phases of evolution were identified. The findings are summarised in Table 2 below.

In conclusion, the management dimension of the RC system has emerged as a crucial condition for an effective aid-coordination system at the country level. In historical perspective, the system has tended to become more complex, in large part as a response to the increasing criticism directed towards the prominent role played by UNDP as the one entity tasked with the management function. In terms of the relationship between the RC and the agencies present at the country level, a long-term development towards a distinct role for the RC that differentiates him / her from the rest of the agencies can be identified. A second long-term and parallel trend, however, seems to be the tendency for the authority of the RC, *vis-à-vis* the members of the UN Country Team, to have contracted and become more limited in historical perspective. The historical analysis also provides ample evidence that the centrifugal forces at work within the UN development system are quite strong. As has been pointed out before, the funding mechanism plays a crucial role in this respect. While the Resident Representative of UNDP in 1969 was clearly directing and steering the activities of the UN development system at the country level, an ordinary RC in 2012 can only hope for voluntary participation by the agencies, funds and programmes in coordination efforts initiated by him / her. At the same time, requests for additional

functions and responsibilities given to RCs – including some seemingly beyond the narrow confines of "development" – seem to have expanded over time, and the instruments at the disposal of the RCs have also become more sophisticated (but also more complex). To an extent, therefore, there seems to be a lurking risk of a (to use an almost proverbial phrase by Christopher Hill) "capability-expectations gap" for the RC system, whereby demands are frequently not matched with corresponding capacity (staffing, resources) and authority.

The themes and issues identified in this chapter are explored further in the next two sections, which focus on the current and "standard" practice of the RC system. Together, they serve as a basis for an assessment of the evolving patterns of differentiation of the RC model that are continuously gaining in importance.

4.2 Practice of country-level aid coordination through the Resident Coordinator

> *Virtually the entire development literature agrees that successful aid programs must be designed around local conditions, circumstances, culture, and leadership* […]. *This requires a highly decentralized approach to development in which authority to make policy decisions is made in the country, not in aid agency headquarters.* Andrew Natsios, former Administrator of USAID (Natsios 2010, 29)

There are various exception that are discussed in Chapter 5, but the "standard model" of UN aid coordination at the country level, which can be seen as the "template" or "default position" (Lindores 2012, 15) for all countries, consists of the Resident Coordinator supported by an office and the UN Country Team consisting of all the UN entities with operational activities in a given country. This chapter assesses the practice of aid coordination under this model, which currently exists in around 60 countries.[81] This provides the basis for the analysis of the evolving patterns of adaptation within the RC system.

What are the role and mandate of the RC in the standard case? The answer to the straightforward question is surprisingly convoluted and multifaceted. From a formal viewpoint, three main documents spell out the RC's respon-

81 Compare data in Chapter 5.

Table 2: Milestones in the evolution of UN country-level aid coordination

Phase	What?	1. Governance	2. Management	3. Setup at country level	4. Mandate	5. Capacity	6. Instruments
1950–1969 Laying the groundwork	**EPTA RR**	**EPTA Technical Assistance Board** (SG and heads of specialised agencies)	**UNDP** (since 1965, EPTA and Special Fund prior)	**Hierarchical setup** Recognised authority of EPTA RR as single leader	**Evolving mandate**	**High** – RR of UNDP has full access to capacity of other agencies	**Limited**
1969–1977 Growing discontent with the UN dev. system	**UNDP RR**	**UNDP Executive Board** Oversight	**UNDP**	**Primus inter pares** "leader of the team"	**Broad mandate** Strategic direction, appraisal of new projects, delegated authority for approval	**High** – RR of UNDP has full access to capacity of other agencies	**Evolving** Country programming
1977–1997 A period of stagnation	**RC**	**DG Development** Overall coordination (delegated by SG) (until '92) **Secretariat** (since '92)	**DG Development** (1977–1979) **UNDP** (since 1979)	**Primus inter pares** Separate RC "team leadership", de facto coupled with RR, authority corroded	**Limited** Coordination of agency activities	**Medium** – No separate capacity endowment, strong reliance on UNDP capacity	**Establishment / reconfiguration** Country programme frame of reference for core funding

1997–2006 A coming revival?	**RC**	**UNDG ExCom (4)** Concerted directives to RCs	**UNDP**	**Primus inter pares** RC function gaining more distinct character, authority further eroding	**Limited** Matching agency programmes to UNDAF, agency funds remain identifiable	**Low to medium** – Limited staff and funding, theoretically cut off from agency capacity	**Comprehensive** UNDAF to "integrate all UN programmes"
2006 – to date Delivering as One and Rising Expectations	**RC / One Leader**	**UNDG Advisory Group (14)** Concerted directives to RCs	**UNDP** (behind firewall)	**Distinct RC with limited authority** Firewall and UNDP country directors separate RC from RR	**Various** Differentiated application of RC model	**Various** – Differentiated application, capacity tends to be higher when "double-hatted"	**Comprehensive** UNDAF, Common Country Assessment (CCA)
Source: own compilation							

sibilities: the standard terms of reference (UNDG 2008c), the generic job description (UNDG 2009b), as well as the ACC Guidelines on the Functioning of the RC System (ACC 1999).[82]

The fact that it took a number of years to develop, negotiate and adopt these fundamental policies for the RC functioning within UNDG already hints at the fact that these documents – as intensely negotiated documents tend to be – are complex, heavy on "agreed language", and neither easy to understand, nor very clear.

Broadly, the three dimensions of aid coordination that provide fundamental orientation for the RC's responsibilities are:

- alignment with partner-country demands and requirements ("country alignment");
- aid coordination of UN operational activities for development ("internal aid coordination");
- aid coordination with other donors ("external aid coordination").

The following section explores the three dimensions of the RC mandate in aid coordination in greater detail. Underlying them – and mainstreamed in their discharge – are additional duties and responsibilities for the RC that come with (in the standard case) being the Secretary-General's highest-ranking representative. Most prominent among them is the advocacy role for the UN system values, standards, principles and activities in a given country; others are the follow-up to global conferences and agreements (such as the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs), representation of non-resident entities, and responsibilities in ensuring common administrative and other services for the UNCT. Under certain circumstances, RCs are also asked to assume the following responsibilities:

- Designated Official for Safety and Security
- Leader of the Disaster Management Team

82 The Terms of Reference, which were approved by UNDG on 10 Nov. 2008, specify that the document *"expand(s) both the previous RC Job Description (annexed to the ACC Guidelines of 1999) and the RC job description finalized by the UNDG in late 2008"* (see ref. UNDG 2009b). This means that formally, there exist two documents outlining the tasks RCs are supposed to perform that both have continued validity, which both illustrates and further adds to the complexity and confusion surrounding the RC role and mandate.

- Director of UN Information Centre, if applicable and existent in country
- Leader of the Humanitarian Country Team, applicable at time of humanitarian crisis when no HC has been designated[83]

While it could be assumed that these seemingly unrelated tasks are seen as an additional burden to RCs already overburdened with coordination tasks, interviewees stressed that these responsibilities in fact constituted a valuable addition for the coordination tasks of RCs.[84] In particular, a joint programmatic and security leadership role was seen as beneficial, as it allowed for a more comprehensive perspective balancing security concerns with considerations of programme delivery. Along the same lines, the RC and director of UN information centre functions were seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing, in that programmatic work was facilitated when the public was well informed about the overall UN engagement in their countries, and communication work benefited from the direct link to the RC. Additional resources and capacity that generally accompanied these responsibilities ensured that taking them on did not overburden the RCs.

4.2.1 Alignment with partner-country demands and requirements

A conflict of interest that is fundamental for the aid relationship is the interplay between what a country demands, and what a donor perceives to be beneficial. In an ideal situation, these two overlap to a significant extent, or are in fact identical. In reality, there is almost always a disparity between the two. Given that country ownership has been demonstrated as a key input for

83 The responsibilities for safety and security as well as disaster management and preparedness are included in the generic ToRs, which means that these functions in the standard case are to be performed by all RCs. The direction of a UN Information Center is subject to agreement between the RC and the Department of Public Information within the Secretariat. As a general rule, the RCs take on this function if and where an Information Center exists. Finally, in the case of an emerging humanitarian crisis situation, RCs also generally assume humanitarian responsibilities until an HC is designated.

84 Personal interviews by the author, October–December 2012.

aid-programme success under the aid-effectiveness paradigm, a high premium has been put on the former.[85]

The standard terms of reference of the RC include provisions for a leadership role of the partner country in determining which UN agencies should be mobilised in support of its national strategy: *"RC acts* […] *in support of national priorities and capacity building* […] *for which the national governments should determine the resident and non-resident UN organization to best respond to specific needs and priorities of the individual country"* (UNDG 2008c, 2). In reality, however, there are signs that the UN programme continues to respond to the institutional structure of the UN development system (UNGA 2012, 15), and that alignment has not yet been fully realised.

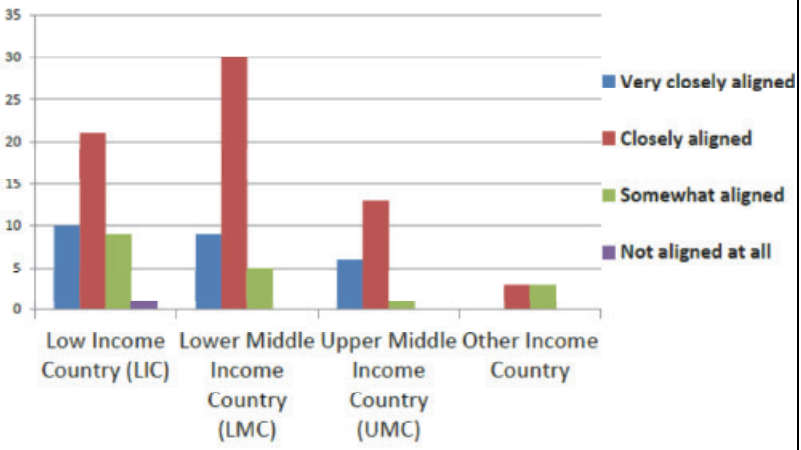
A number of the UN member states do not consider the aid-effectiveness process, which originated in the OECD-DAC working party on aid effectiveness, to have sufficient legitimacy (Weinlich 2011b). As a result, the UN development system's relation towards the Paris Declaration and aid-effectiveness process has therefore never been without its challenges. At the same time, by signing the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Outcome Document, which have codified the principle of alignment of donor activities and programmes with partner-country demands and requirements as well as the other aid/development-effectiveness principles, the members of UNDG have felt compelled to commit to their adherence.

The primacy of the host government can be seen as one of the guiding principles for all UN entities with operational activities for development, and is ingrained in the operational policies for the RC system. At the same time, the latest round of Paris Declaration monitoring suggested that only about 34 per cent of ODA originating from the UN development system for the public sector is reported on partner countries' budgets (OECD 2011c). There are various aspects to this assessment, including the very nature of the UN development system focussing on capacity-building, norms and

85 As indicated in the literature on aid effectiveness by the OECD and other sources, the purpose of aid coordination is to support a country's own developmental efforts. However, as has been pointed out by David Booth (2011, 10) and others, there are also situations of partner governments not being development-orientated, which may warrant a more interventionist approach.

Figure 4: Alignment of UNDS activities with partner countries by economic classification

"The activities of the UN and your country's development needs and priorities are …"



Source: UNS (2012)

technical assistance, which are per se difficult to report on budget.[86] More recent qualitative evidence suggests that there continues to be a degree of mismatch between activities originating within the UN development system and what partner countries see as their most important development needs and priorities (see Figure 4).

In order to ensure the alignment of UNCT activities with the partner-country demands and requirements, RCs rely on rather limited means. While the RC mandate contains provisions that ensure their prominent role during the programme design phase, including the authority to lead the team in strategic development of the UNDAF and to take *"the final decision on strategic focus and allocation of resources against that focus, if consensus cannot be reached within the UNCT"* (UNDG 2009b), the RC has no authority to ensure that agency programmes and activities reflect UNDAF priorities during

86 Compare the extended study by Vatterodt (2008) on the UN's implementation of the Paris Declaration.

the implementation phase. In addition, regarding the issue of the composition of the UN development system conforming to the needs and priorities of a partner country from the outset, RC again have no formal authority, and in practice are rarely consulted, on issues of opening / maintaining individual agency representations at the country level.

The Paris Declaration and aid-effectiveness principles can be seen to take a rather comprehensive view of partner-country alignment, which, to an extent, contrasts with the UN development system's understanding of alignment. While the former includes, for example, the use of national systems for procurement, reporting, public financial management, auditing and other purposes, based on their unique role and mandate, UN entities emphasise a much more limited form of alignment – stressing in particular the inclusion and participation of national authorities in UN internal planning and programming processes – at the expense of the "broader" dimensions (UN 2008, 12; UNDG 2008a; Vatterodt 2008, 21 ff.).[87]

Such claims for exemptions from alignment processes can partially be seen as a consequence of UN entities being perceived as neutral and independent actors, often having a strong stake in supporting partner-country efforts in aid coordination directly. As part of their mandate, RCs are tasked with ensuring effective support by the UNCT for government aid-coordination processes through capacity-building within aid-coordination units at central planning ministries and other measures (UNDG 2008c, 4 ff.; 2009b, 2 ff.). In a majority of countries, RCs are also co-chairing, together with partner governments, high-level aid-coordination fora that exist in most partner countries (see next section for details). Based on its mandate for capacity-building in the area of aid effectiveness, it is UNDP that is the most active among the UNCT members in this area. Against this background, at least to an extent, UN development system entities perceive their proximity to partner-country institutions as making obsolete the necessity for alignment processes.

87 Under the Paris Declaration process, "alignment" relates to the donor-government relationship, meaning that donors base their support on partner countries' strategies, institutions and procedures. "Harmonisation", on the other hand, generally relates to an arrangement between donors bringing in line their procedures for planning, funding, disbursement, monitoring, evaluating and reporting with each other. The RC operational guidelines and policies generally refer to the objective of "harmonising" (instead of "aligning") UN support with partner countries.

While the literature (e.g. Booth 2011) has argued that alignment hinges on the precondition of a developmental orientation of partner countries, the RC and UN entities, based on the fundamental principle of sovereign independence of UN member states, have in the past exhibited a tendency to come down on the side of partner countries. In that sense, a certain divergence within the RC mandate can be identified between, on the one hand, the closeness of the relationship between the RC and partner countries, and, on the other hand, the obligation to *"advocate fundamental UN values"* and, in particular, a responsibility for *"promoting international human rights standards and principles and advocating for human rights as a common UN value in dialogue and interactions with national actors"* (UNDG 2008c). While proximity can be advantageous in this respect, as it may allow RCs to make their voices heard more clearly, what has to be avoided is a situation where closeness compromises the advocacy function.[88]

4.2.2 External aid coordination at country level

There are several reasons why partner-country governments have tended to approach external aid coordination from a partnership perspective rather than asserting a strong leadership role. These include weak capacities in aid administration, donor dependency, as well as a tacit acceptance on the side of partner countries that aid agencies are also faced with pressures to justify their actions *vis-à-vis* their principals. As a result, external aid-coordination groups are frequently being configured in a way that ensures donor involvement, including on the basis of co-chairing, or even chairing, arrangements.

The RC plays a prominent role in this regard. Aid coordination fora constitute the principal mechanism for coordinating the different bilateral and multilateral donor agencies engaged at the country level. With significant variation across countries, there exists a surprisingly homogenous "core" model in the majority of developing countries, which consists of an overarching aid-coordination forum, where questions relating to the direction and implementation of aid programmes are discussed. This forum generally meets on an annual, biennial or quarterly basis, with high-level participation from both the side of government (often ministers or permanent secretaries) and donors (heads of cooperation, heads of agencies, etc.). These high-level

88 This may hold true in particular for those countries where there is self-financing (i.e. partner countries providing earmarked support for UNDP activities within their territories).

fora often exist alongside a number of sectoral and other technical working groups with more frequent exchanges. In a majority of countries, the RC has been given a leadership position within these partner-country government aid-coordination fora, which cover all major donors present in a given country, with RCs acting as co-chair, co-convener or even chair of the group (see Table 3).

That the RC is frequently given such a prominent role in external aid coordination (i.e. in addition to the UN internal function) is tribute to the special recognition and legitimacy, but also the unique nature of the relationship that the UN and the RC – as its highest-level representative – traditionally enjoy in partner countries.

The "special status" accorded to (in the standard case) the RC in many respects is a consequence of the perception of the UN's neutral role, which, based on the organisation's universal membership and its strong regard for the sovereignty of its member states (Stokke 2009, 484), makes it a *"preferred partner of developing countries"* (Weinlich 2011b, 18). This credibility and legitimacy bestowed upon the RC puts him / her in a unique position to perform the external aid-coordination function. In those countries with a UN leadership role in donor aid coordination, the RC thus serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, he / she aims to ensure a coherent representation of the UN development system within the larger donor grouping, while on the

Table 3: Leadership role for UN in external aid coordination

	UN has leading role in aid effectiveness and coordination	No such role
Africa	31	9
Arab States	6	8
Asia and the Pacific	11	10
Europe and the CIS	13	5
Latin America & Caribbean	9	13
TOTAL	**70 (56%)**	**55 (44%)**

Source: UNDG / UN DOCO (2012)

other hand, the aim is to ensure the proper functioning of the broader aid-coordination forum, including its alignment with the government's policy.

The fact that due to its origins in the OECD-DAC working party on aid effectiveness, which is often perceived as an instrument of club governance by Western donors, the legitimacy of the aid-effectiveness process and principles has never been fully recognised by a number of UN member states (Weinlich 2011b), which has often played in favour of a stronger UN role in external aid coordination at the country level. For the RC – and the UN development system more broadly – the external coordination role has the potential for leveraging external funds and activities, but in particular for influencing policy debates within the larger donor aid-coordination fora, in line with UN norms, values and activities. Evidence suggests, however, that this prominent and more (externally) visible role and function of the RC often times is not fully put to use and acknowledged within the UN development system. As can be seen from the various guiding documents of the RC system, UN internal coordination constitutes the clear priority of the RC, with external coordination becoming an afterthought. Within the standard terms of reference for the RC, only 3 of 93 paragraphs specifically refer to the role in external aid coordination, and only in general terms. Accordingly, the RC:

> *Promotes and supports effective dialogue and interaction between the UNCT and non-resident agencies and Government and other stake-holders on national priorities, policy-making and aid coordination mechanism.* (UNDG 2008c, 5)

For RCs to fully carry out external aid coordination, this would require an adequate level of support and capacity for the function. The perception of a close link between the external and internal coordination functions further complicates the matter, as some external stakeholders argue that the UN development system has to *"first put its own house in order"*,[89] before directing their attention to the external dimension.

4.2.3 Internal aid coordination at country level

Partner governments as well as other donor agencies have frequently regarded the question of coordination among the different UN entities as an "*inter-*

89 Personal interview by the author, October 2012.

nal UN family affair" (Kulessa 1995, 1076). At the same time, government participation in UN internal aid coordination has become more pronounced more recently, in particular in those countries that follow the "Delivering as One" pilot initiative with the support of – and at the request of – partner governments. But even in those 30+ countries, this has generally not translated into governments challenging the role of the RC as the principal coordinator of the different UN entities. In fact, only a very limited number of countries, which tended to have high levels of public-sector capacity and average incomes, have opted to coordinate the activities of the UN development system themselves and have therefore asked the UN not to appoint an RC in their country (Lindores 2012, 14).

This state of affairs is reflected within the RC mandate. Accordingly, the RC policy guidance makes abundantly clear that the coordination of the UN funds, programmes and agencies with a country presence – and which together form the UNCT ("internal aid coordination") – is the prime responsibility of the RC. The general and specific duties of the RC in this regard encompass:

- ensuring a strategic and focussed programme that draws on UN development system mandates and expertise and that is in line with the national plans and priorities;
- facilitating resource mobilisation for the UNCT as a whole; and
- reporting UNCT results to government.

Other duties related to the internal aid-coordination function include:

- participation in mutual and reciprocal performance appraisals;
- implementation of the guidance note on working relations between the RC and UNCT (UNDG 2008c, 2009b; ACC 1999).

The fact that the mechanisms and processes for UN internal aid coordination are fairly more developed and operationalised than corresponding tools for the alignment with partner countries and external aid-coordination dimensions is also related to the fact that the average number of UN entities active per country is often times as large – or larger – than the number of other external donors with a country presence. Table 5 below provides an overview of the state of fragmentation of country-level operations within the UN development system. The average of approx. 15 UN entities – including five specialised agencies – per country is indicative of the RC's

Table 4: Size of UN Country Teams by world regions

Region	Regional fraction of world total	Average size of UNCT per country	Average specialised agencies	Average funds and pro-grammes	Average size other UN entities
Asia & Pacific	21.5 %	18.2	6.0	7.2	5.0
Arab States	13.2 %	15.6	5.3	6.2	4.2
Africa	32.4 %	15.3	5.9	6.6	2.8
Europe & CIS	14.7 %	12.5	4.4	5.5	2.6
Latin America & Caribbean	18.2 %	14.8	5.3	5.8	3.7
World	**100 %**	**15.3**	**5.5**	**6.3**	**3.5**

Source: own compilation based on data from UNDG / UN DOCO (2012)

aid-coordination burden. It has to be noted that there is significant variation in terms of the size and composition of UNCTs, with the number of agencies generally decreasing with higher income levels.

In order to perform internal aid coordination, the RC has several instruments and processes at hand that principally cover a full project or programme cycle consisting of the key phases of analysis, programming, implementation, and monitoring and reporting (Klingebiel 1999; Murphy 2006; Jolly / Emmerij / Weiss 2009; Stokke 2009; Browne 2011; Mueller 2010a):

- Analysis: A shared understanding of a country's situation, needs and requirements constitutes a sound basis for aid coordination. This crucially includes an assessment of the UNCT comparative advantage vis-à-vis the needs of the country and what other donors are providing. As part of the aid-coordination process, the UNCT, under the leadership of the RC, conducts an analysis of the specific development challenges in a country at the beginning of a coordinated programme. Normally, the tool for this assessment is the Common Country Assessment. The detailed UNDAF guidelines also offer the option of replacing the CCA partially or in full

with suitable analytical work conducted by other donors under the condition that the government is in the lead and the UNCT is participating in the process. The CCA is also increasingly used in the transition phase between a humanitarian mission and regular development engagement as an analytical "bridge".

- Programming: While the CCA constitutes an agreed point of reference and departure, the UN development assistance framework serves as the consolidated UN business plan that is negotiated and agreed upon with the partner government. The UNDAF constitutes the common strategic planning (and subsequent results-reporting) tool for the UN development system. It generally runs for a period of three to six years and efforts are undertaken to synchronize it with national planning cycles. The detailed guidelines for the preparation of the UNDAF[90] have undergone significant evolution since publication of the first guidance in 1999, with current guidelines (2010) requiring the UNCT to identify three to five priorities among the challenges identified in the CCA. The RC normally leads the consensual process of drawing-up the UNDAF, is responsible for ensuring the engagement of specialised and non-resident agencies, and – in the rare instances where the UN entities are unable to reach a compromise – acts as final arbitrator. As the UNDAF normally also defines a funding gap, the RC also leads fundraising efforts. The final UNDAF is sent to the UNDG Chair as well as the partner-country government for approval.
- Programme implementation: With the UNDAF adopted at the level of the UNCT, responsibility for implementation of individual activities, projects and programmes underneath the framework remains with the individual UN funds, programmes and agencies on the basis of separate and entity-specific country programme documents. This requires that UNDAF contributions are normally clearly delineated by UN entities. The role of the RC during this phase remains limited to formal oversight.
- Monitoring and reporting: An agreed UNDAF includes a detailed matrix for results-reporting. The UNDAF guidelines foresee an annual review of the UNDAF to take stock and reflect changes, as well as preparation of a more comprehensive UNDAF progress report, which is to take place

90 Programming Reference Guide, UNDG webpage; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=4 (accessed 15 Dec. 2012).

at least once during the UNDAF cycle and to be submitted by the RC to the partner government.

In performing UN internal aid coordination on the basis of these instruments, RCs are faced with a number of challenges in practice, relating in particular to the programming and implementation phases. The UNDAF process has strengthened collaboration among UN entities, including through the encouragement of joint programmes between two or more UN entities. At the same time, the instrument constitutes an "*intra-UN initiative"*, which does relatively little to promote cooperation with other donors (Vatterodt 2008, 35). Against this background, there has been a long-standing debate about the operationalisation of the UNDAF and whether it should evolve into a singular planning tool for all UN entities. As a matter of fact, the insufficient binding power of the UNDAF has been acknowledged by UNDG itself, which states in one of its guiding documents that *"the UNDAF alone cannot ensure coherent and comprehensive operationalization"*, suggesting that only a single operational document that would replace entity-specific programming and other operational documents would *"reduce* […] *the risk that UN system agencies' programmes become fragmented."*[91] Addressing this limitation, the Secretary-General recently proposed to replace all entity-specific country-programming documents at the country level with "One Programmes" that would bring together, at the level of each country, the strategy and operations with the budgets, all in one document (UNSG 2012b, 32). Such measures have the potential to strengthen the integration of the UN development system at the country level, but given that the UNDAF process has already been heavily criticised for its length and inflexibility, there are questions about the cost-benefit implications of such a model. More specifically, the UNDAF has been criticised as a strategic framework that does not specify concrete steps in terms of programme implementation and the operations of individual UN entities, thus falling short of the intended reduction in inefficiencies and overlap. As is the case now, upon preparation of the UNDAF, entities generally prepare their individual agency country programmes in alignment with the priorities identified in the UNDAF. Such duplication of work, however, seems unavoidable, given the vertical structure of the UN development system.

91 UNDAF Action Plan Guidance, UNDG webpage, online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=4 (accessed 17 Dec. 2012).

In addition to these challenges surrounding the central UN internal aid-coordination tool at the hands of RCs, there is a broader challenge resulting from an ambiguous mandate regarding the implementation of the UNDAF. Whereas the RC guidelines outline that *RCs "facilitate and oversee* […] *the design and implementation of the UNDAF"* (UNDG 2008c, 6), in practice the general understanding is that the RC's role in UNDAF implementation remains rather limited following its adoption – in line with the RC terms of reference, which state that *"UNCT member agencies maintain their authority over their mandates, resources* […] *and implementation choices* […]*"* (UNDG 2008c, 3).[92]

The matter is further complicated by the funding trends within the UN development system (cf. Chapter 2), which renders the medium-term orientation of the UNDAF at odds with the short-term availability of funding within individual UN entities. As a result, there often exist significant differences between "intended" and "realised" strategy in practice (UNSG 2012b, 31). Whereas the fact that the RC is called upon to lead fundraising efforts for the UNDAF funding gap for the UNCT as a whole can be seen, in principle, as a positive measure to increase coherency, it has also aggravated criticism regarding independence and the link to UNDP.

Monitoring and reporting processes continue to emphasise vertical lines of accountability (i.e. within individual UN entities), as evidenced by the fact that submission of the UNDAF report to the partner government lacks an equivalent within the UN development system. Individual UN funds, programmes and agencies continue to remain accountable for performance of "their" projects and programmes, and report to their HQs and executive boards through individual progress reports accordingly. Together, these are clear signs of duplication resulting from the vertical organisation of the

92 In order to address challenges arising from disagreements among the UNCT during the implementation phase, UNDG promotes the adoption of "codes of conduct" to be negotiated among the UNCT members and the RC. For cases of severe conflicts, a "dispute resolution mechanism" was created in 2009 – compare "Dispute Resolution Mechanism", adopted by UNDG on 29 January, 2009, available on the UNDG webpage; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=133 (accessed 17 Dec. 2012). The mechanism aims at resolving *"disputes associated with UNCT common processes such as common services, common programming, joint programmes, and related funding"*. The mechanism foresees a country-level process aimed at reaching an amicable resolution between the disputing parties, which would normally (i.e. when he / she would not be one of the concerned parties) be led by the RC.

UN development system. In a move to counter the diffused accountability among the UNCT and the RC, the mechanism was broadened to include an additional reporting requirement to the partner-country government as well. The UNCT has at its disposal an instrument to assess the RC (One80 tool), which, however, is not matched with a corresponding instrument for the RC to hold UNCT members accountable for UNDAF results achieved.

A crucial aspect of all three dimensions of aid coordination – but in particular of the UN internal role as the main focus of the work of RCs – concerns the RC's capacity and capability to perform the required tasks. The main sources of funding for the RC system,[93] which are administered by DOCO, come in the form of direct support, which UNDP – as manager of the system – provides from its core resources, and which generally covers the salaries of RCs and their immediate staff, as well as office maintenance and a small budget (Support for Resident Coordinators fund) for coordination expenses. Other funds, programmes and agencies often contribute to the direct functioning of the RC system as well by means of seconding specialised staff or in-kind contributions, and donors also provide additional forms of support – mostly to be used for additional specialised personnel in RC offices – in the form of earmarked contributions through the UN country coordination fund (UNCCF). At the request of UN member states,[94] efforts are currently underway to put the financing of the RC system on a more equitable basis through the introduction of a cost-sharing arrangement among participating UN entities, which UNDG members have, in principle, already agreed to (UNSG 2012b). This will be an important contribution to ensure that RCs have the necessary resources to fulfil their role effectively.

Political economy analysis offers some insights into the reasons why the role of the RCs in coordinating UNCT assistance has met with significant challenges. A number of reasons that can be found within the UN development system include:

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93 Through the TCPR (2007) resolution, member states have requested the Secretary-General to report on an annual basis on the *"functioning of the RC system, including costs and benefits"*. The reports, five of which have been published by 2012, provide detailed information and figures, including on how the RC system is being funded (cf. UNSG 2008b, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012a).

94 Through the ECOSOC resolution E/2011/7; online: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2011/res%202011.7.pdf (accessed 15 Dec. 2012).

- incentive system within individual agencies that sometimes favour competition and distinct action over cooperation, as this could be seen to enhance visibility;
- competition of agencies for turf and donor funding;
- imbalances within the composition of the UNCT (e.g. one dominant agency), which can cause fear of a "takeover" among the other agencies.

At the same time, a number of factors were also identified that point towards obstacles to be encountered on the side of partner governments, including:

- Governments may wish to preserve their freedom in playing individual UN entities off against each other, including for the purpose of improving the terms of their engagement;
- Governments are wary of any approach that brings the UNCT closer together, based on a concern that it could lead to stronger demands and pressure to reform by a "united front" that is "ganging up" against their interests (cf. WB 1998, 21).

The theoretical model suggested that – depending on different country contexts – the choice of most-effective and efficient coordination model depended upon the outcome of a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the level of maximum internal and external programme consistency, justifiable in terms of formalisation and institutionalisation costs. At the request of member states, the Secretariat has been covering the matter in regular intervals through the "Functioning of the Resident Coordinator System, including costs and benefits" reporting series (UNSG 2008b, 2009, 2010, 2011) and has commissioned two comprehensive studies.[95] All sources contain strong reservations concerning the possibility of establishing the costs and benefits of the RC system in monetary terms, pointing in particular to the inherent difficulties of quantifying harmonisation gains, which accrue in particular on the partner government side in terms of reduced transaction costs and reduced strain on administrative capacities (Ronald 2011, 28; UNSG 2011, 22). At the same time, the Secretariat argues that given the reductions in duplication and the synergies that have been realised, *"the costs of coordinating the UN development system remain small compared to the total value of country programmable resources"* and that it is *"reasonable to assume that benefits of coordination exceed the costs"* (UNSG 2012b). Against all odds,

95 Results of only one of the two studies are publicly available (Ronald 2011).

the UN development system therefore seems to have been able to establish mechanisms, processes and procedures that, given what had been identified as a very challenging context, are forging a minimum level of coherence.

4.3 Shifting expectations? The evolving role and mandate for RCs

RCs serve a multitude of needs and perform numerous roles, which, together, are only partially reflected in their mandate. This is because the functioning of RCs within the broader country-level framework covering both internal and external aid coordination – as well as processes of alignment with the government's plans and priorities, as described above – has significantly evolved over time. Drawing on stakeholder perspectives as well as an analysis of the existing body of regulations and operational guidance, this section provides an overview and assessment of the evolution of the RC role and mandate.

What should be the role and mandate of an RC at the country level? Although it is seemingly straightforward, this question elicits a surprisingly broad range of responses from stakeholders and experts in the RC system. The main reason for this cacophony of perceptions about the future role of the RC relates to the fact that there is currently significant political disagreement and a broad variety of competing perceptions among all concerned stakeholders about what is – and ought to be in the future – the role and mandate of the RC, which is at least partly in line with the saying *"where you sit is where you stand"*. Entities with an immediate interest or stake in the RC system include:

- First, those that benefit from, and are affected by, its performance, that is, primarily partner governments and UN entities involved in operational activities for development;
- Second, those that are responsible for its functioning, in particular UN member states providing policy advice through ECOSOC and other fora; UNDP managing the RC system on behalf of the UN development system; and DOCO as UNDG's support structure;
- Third, depending on the country contexts, those that collaborate with the RC system and rely on it, at least in some areas of their work, such as humanitarian actors (in the case of RC / HC double-hatting), several

departments of the UN Secretariat[96] in integrated peacekeeping, peacebuilding or political missions, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council, etc.;

- Finally, those individuals that perform its mandate, that is, the Resident Coordinators themselves.

Longstanding disagreements about the RC role have also made negotiations about the RC policy and operational guidelines more difficult, and have contributed to their complexity and ambiguity. It was felt that this was necessary to accommodate competing perceptions of key stakeholders (compare previous sections), but also because provisions – as the outcome of long negotiations and language (compromise) – have remained rather static on the basis of the incentive for all stakeholders not to reopen proceedings. An interrelated point is that the RC operational guidelines have been found to be little understood and known by partner governments, members of the UNCT and RCs themselves.[97] All of these factors have contributed to a discrepancy between the *de jure* mandate and the *de facto* role played by RCs in practice, which is becoming increasingly apparent.

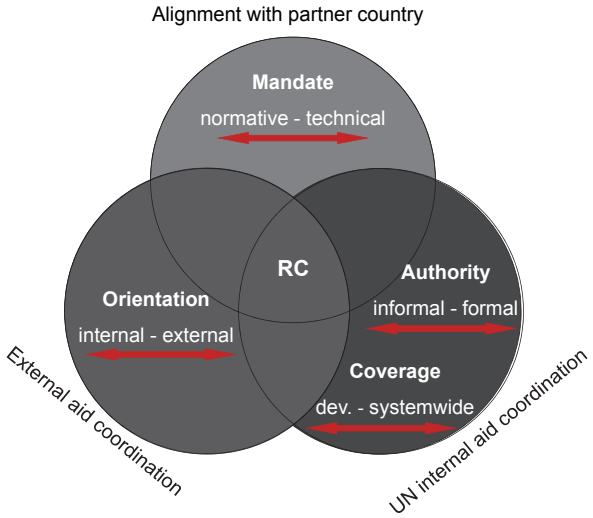
Differences in opinion about the future RC role and mandate tend to relate to a limited number of aspects, with competing claims and sensitivities oscillating across a spectrum of opinions. The continua presented in Figure 5 can be seen as the major areas of disagreement.

- Mandate: Pertaining to the interaction with the partner government, perceptions of how the RC mandate should evolve are manifold, in particular when it comes to sensitive political matters, such as addressing internal affairs of partner countries, but also advocacy for UN norms and values. At the core of the debate lies the question of whether – and to what extent – the RC, as the "embodiment" of the UN, ought to pursue an agenda that could potentially be independent of a partner country. The traditional conception foresees a predominantly technical – as opposed to normative or political – approach towards the RC relationship with partner governments, wherein the RC interprets the partner country's development challenges in order to design an appropriate UN engagement.

96 In particular the Department for Political Affairs (DPA), Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Public Information (DPI).

97 This has been confirmed through personal interviews by the author, October–December 2012.

Figure 5: Differing perceptions of the RC role and mandate



Source: own compilation

Some stakeholders, however, see the need for a more insistent RC role, in particular in addressing human rights challenges, if circumstances demand and allow for it. The latter implies that an RC office commands the necessary capabilities for systematic human rights monitoring. Others categorically caution against such an evolution, which they perceive to be incongruent with the fundamental principle of the sovereignty of all UN member states.[98] While its inclusion was initially disputed, the RC job description today includes some "carefully worded" references, in

98 The matter is further complicated in situations where the RC function is integrated into a political or peacekeeping UN mission mandated by the UN Security Council, but also in partner countries that fully – (or to a large extent) "self-fund" a UN presence in their country. In this regard, one interviewee (personal interview by the author, October 2012) stated: *"A situation where the normative UN mandate is 'on demand' only needs to be avoided."*

particular to human rights advocacy as part of the RC mandate; human rights concerns have also been included in the RC induction training.[99] While difficult to separate conceptually, there seems to be much less of a consensus, however, regarding a more "political" engagement of RCs. Such an engagement is taking place in practice, for example, at the margins of a transition from a humanitarian or post-conflict mission to a development-focussed mission. Closer involvement of the RC in political affairs, which in UN circles is often and somewhat vaguely referred to under the label of "UN ambassador", has seen strong opposition by a majority of UN member states, as it implies fundamental changes in the relationship of states to the RC, and the UN more broadly. Compounding the matter is the perception that such changes would imply a closer link between the RC system and the Secretariat, and in particular the Department of Political Affairs, which is generally associated with Security Council interventions. In theory, it would also require an expansion of the RC representation to make it universal in all countries. Taking into account the increasing interlinkages between development issues and the prevalent institutional and political framework at the country level, there are indications that steps towards a broadening of the normative and political roles of the RC are taking place in practice, albeit short of recourse to mandate redefinition, given the cumbersome formal processes within UNDG.[100]

- Coverage: The growing diversity of, and differentiation among, developing-country conditions has also had a more direct impact on the UN internal aid-coordination system, which has stipulated that the RC system, over time, moved "beyond development" (ibid.). The orientation of the RC system traditionally was set to the confines of the UN development system. More recently, however, the links with other areas of UN work – humanitarian missions, advising and assisting political transitions, engaging on human rights, in addition to building capacity for development – are becoming more pronounced, resulting in traditional silos being broken down. This becomes evident, for example, from the composition of the UNCT as the main frame of reference for the work of the RC, which encompasses all entities of the UN system that carry out

99 Personal interview by the author, September 2012.

100 Ibid. Several interviewees alluded to these changes, with some referring to an "evolution by stealth".

"operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition" – a description that goes well beyond the immediate development focus. Member states disagree in their assessments concerning to what extent such an evolution of the RC as the "development coordinator" towards a "UN coordinator" is welcome, and whether – or not – it should be encouraged to progress further.

- Authority: Regarding the UN internal aid-coordination dimension, among stakeholders there is an intense ongoing debate about the type of relationship between the RC and UNCT that maximises the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the UN's contribution to the development of its partner countries (cf. definition of aid coordination in section 1.2). At the heart of this debate is the question of whether the current collegial and collaborative system, with an RC whose authority as "primus inter pares" relies exclusively on the voluntary cooperation of UNCT members, ought to be changed to a system whereby the RC would be endowed with formal authority to manage and direct the activities and programmes of UN entities at the country level ("RC as arbitrator or manager"). As it stands today, the RC mainly functions as an intermediary between different groups, relying to a great extent on personal capacity and charisma to perform his / her duties. This role is reflected in the labels other than "coordinator" that at are frequently chosen among stakeholders in referring to the RC, labels which include "conveyor", "communicator", "team leader", "service point", "enabling mechanism" and "custodian for cross-cutting issues". At the same time, instances of RCs acting as arbitrators are rare and only possible within strict confines.[101] The option at the other side of the spectrum is frequently referred to as an "empowered RC"[102] model, which has gathered substantial support from within the UN membership, as well as some strong resistance.
- Orientation: A final area of debate concerns the particular balance between the internal and external aid-coordination functions of the RC mandate. As UN internal aid coordination has become the "core busi-

101 According to one interviewee, in case of arising conflicts, UNCT members are *"happy that there is a higher authority to take up difficult issues"* (personal interview by the author, September 2012).

102 The term itself originates from the report of the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence (2006), which states that *"To manage the One United Nations country programme there needs to be one leader – an empowered resident coordinator"* (A/61/583, p. 11).

ness" of the RC, there have been concerns that UNCT meetings are too often structured around UN internal organisational matters, and that the RC function is becoming too secluded and unresponsive towards developments within broader donor groupings at the country level as a result.

Against this background, the immediate conclusion is that the debates outlined above need to be pursued further to eventually forge a new consensus among UN member states and other stakeholders regarding – in particular, but not exclusively – the focus of the RC mandate, the extent of its coverage, the degree of its authority and the point of reference for its orientation. The broader aim would be to bring expectations placed upon the RC system and evolving demands in line (again) with the existing mandate and capabilities of the function. In practice, this would require changes to a number of institutions and processes surrounding the RC system, including selection and appointment, training, operational and policy guidelines; capacity- and support-provided structures; as well as career-path development. Established practice would see such efforts implemented through an inter-agency process with UNDG at its core. Finally, a review of the guiding principles for the RC system outlined in the TCPR 2007 resolution – that is, that the RC system should be owned by the UN development system as a whole, that its functioning should be participatory, collegial and accountable, and that its management is firmly anchored in UNDP (cf. Section 3.3) – should form part of the intergovernmental debates about the future evolution of the RC system.

5 Differentiation within the Resident Coordinator system

> *The question that requires thorough examination is when is leverage maximized by the system working as a system, when by individual agencies acting individually and when do specific configurations need to be tailored to the specific issue at hand. It is improbable that there is a one-size-fits-all prescription for maximizing leverage* – Secretary-General (UNSG 2012b, 15)

The RC system does not function the same way in every country and *"the exact modalities of representation and coordination through the resident coordinators vary from country to country"* (Fomerand / Dijkzeul 2007, 572). The previous chapter assessed what could be called the "standard option",

or default case, of the RC system. However, this is not the only option that exists. The UN development system today has a presence in a diverse range of more than 130 countries worldwide, including China, the Marshall Islands, Somalia, Haiti and Chile, each of which faces particular development challenges. Among the big providers of development cooperation, the UN is often viewed as the one actor with the most heterogeneous partner-country portfolio, and the one with the most extensive exposure to diverse country situations. The diverse range of the UN partner countries has come to shape the configuration and functioning of the UN development and RC systems.

Given the functionally decentralised character of the UN development system – and against the background of the historical evidence – the chances for the formation of an overarching strategy to guide the adaptation of the UN country-level presence and coordination-mechanisms presence remain rather low. Voluntary inter-agency coordination on the basis of member state policy guidance, which the UN development system has been relying on throughout its existence, will in all likelihood continue to be central to UN country-level aid coordination. It is therefore a central premise of this paper that practical adaptation within the UN development system would have to evolve in an iterative fashion from the bottom-up through the RC system.

Against the background of a rapidly changing geographic localisation of poor people, expectations are that the diverse range of UN partner countries is set to increase further in the future. In recent years, the number of low-income countries has been in retreat, and the world has registered a corresponding rise in the number of middle-income countries. This has resulted in what Kanbur / Sumner (2011) have called *"the new geography of global poverty"*. Most recently, the Secretary-General – in his report of progress in implementing the TCPR 2007 and in previous resolutions containing policy guidance for the operational activities for development within the UN development system (UNSG 2012b) – has identified a number of additional global trends that, in his view, the UN development system needs to respond to. These include the emergence of new global centres of growth, the intensification of global challenge such as climate change, a changing relationship between states and markets as well as the emergence of new development actors (cf. also Jenks 2012). The debate about the implications of these new trends for the UN development system country presence, including the RC system, has recently started, but so far it has not resulted in any conclusive plan. To be sure, the UN development system is by no means the only development player that is struggling with how to respond to the

emerging development trends and realign its missions, policies and country presence to the new realities. Similar debates are taking place within the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and other institutions.

This chapter examines the differentiation of the RC system. The first section explores some of the underlying factors suggested to be behind the differentiated application of the RC system in practice, which are then substantiated through a stock-taking of the different "hats" of RCs. On that basis, six "models" of how the RC is being applied in current practice are identified. The final section suggests some potential avenues for further adaptation of the RC system in the future.

5.1 Criteria for differentiation

There are multiple criteria that have an impact on a differentiated engagement with partner countries, and they can be found both on the side of partner governments as well as within the characteristics and functioning of the engaging donor institution. On the former, arguably the most commonly held principle is country income group. Presenting the frame of reference is the World Bank classification, which is based on certain monetary thresholds of per capita income expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) and ranges from low-income countries (LICs) to middle-income countries (MICs) – which is further divided into upper-middle and lower-middle groups (U-MIC and L-MIC) – and finally to high-income countries (HICs). The government's approach towards its role and engagement in day-to-day aid coordination is another criterion.

Similarly, characteristics on the side of the engaging donor are equally important in determining how aid agencies structure their relationships with partner countries. Overall volume, composition (technical, financial cooperation) or sectoral focus or specific modalities (budget support, loans, triangular cooperation, etc.) are all possible criteria. With regards to the RC system, the degree of authority in internal and external aid coordination is seen as being among the important factors. Arguably, one of the strongest conditioning effects, however, relates to the size and composition of the UNCT. That the UN development system aims to respond to partner-country needs and priorities is a fundamental and venerable objective of the UN development system, which has long been recognised by the UN member states as well as within the system. Accordingly, member states in the Gen-

eral Assembly[103] have stated that "*the country-level presence of the United Nations system should be tailored to meet the specific development needs of recipient countries, as required by their country programmes.*" Similarly, the Chair of UNDG, Helen Clark, at a conference of the DaO countries in Tirana in 2012 remarked that the group aimed "*to ensure that the development system offers appropriate configurations and responses in the diverse range of countries we serve.*"[104] Both of these requirements have fundamental and far-reaching implications for all of the UN entities: While an adequate response relates in particular to the services offered and the skill sets and capacities available within the UN development system at the request of a partner country, the configuration boils down to the more practical issue of which UN entity should be engaged or not in which country, and whether that engagement requires a presence (i.e. a representation office) on the ground, or whether the status of non-resident agency suffices.

Indeed, the composition and size of the UN presence at the country level – that is, who is a member or not of the UNCT – is a sensitive matter whose influence on the RC functioning is as obvious as it is important. Because of its decentralised character of decision-making, and given the strong emphasis on the individual responsibility of the individual entities, the UN development system is not endued with a strategy to guide expansion and contraction of its combined country-level presence. Rather, differentiation of the UN presence to date has taken place in an arbitrary and ad-hoc fashion, with individual UN funds, agencies and programmes following a variety of criteria with individual logics that determine under what circumstances a country office is established. Among others, these include country income group, programme volume thresholds and level of need. This fact has been confirmed by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU 1997, 9), which noted that *"The context for country-level representation is extremely complex and conforms to no apparent blueprint of coordination among the UN entities."*

In a wayward attempt to substitute and compensate for the deficiencies resulting from the lack of a strategic approach towards UN field-level composition, the claim towards participation and inclusiveness has emerged as

103 UNGA (2005); Resolution A/RES/59/250, para. 62.

104 Helen Clark, UNDG Chair on the occasion of the opening of the DaO conference in Tirana, 27 June 2012; online: http://www.undg.org/docs/12556/Helen%20Clark%20Speech%20-%20Delivering%20as%20One%20Tirana%20Conference%20June%202012.pdf.

a principle cornerstone of the functioning of the UN development system. Indeed, documented references to the claim that participation in aid-coordination processes takes places on the basis of all-encompassing participation of *all* the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition within a partner country are so numerous that they justify the notion of a principle of inclusiveness being in place. Crucially, this principle entails that all members of the UNCT participate in aid-coordination processes in an equal fashion and on the basis of principally equal rights and obligations as members of the UNCT. Concerns about the usefulness of the inclusiveness principle have been voiced repeatedly, including from a majority of the interviewees,[105] relating in particular to the resulting increase in transaction costs. While often not fully justified through equivalent gains in coherency, additional costs incurred through adherence to the inclusiveness principle have to be borne, as it was regarded as the "politically correct route" towards aid coordination. At the same time, it has been argued that while additional coordination costs through the inclusiveness principle may be incurred on the side of the UNCT through entities, benefits may be accrued outside the UNCT (i.e. with partner governments). More recently, a coordination model alternative to an inclusive approach has been proposed that focusses instead on closer coordination processes and procedures for a smaller group of UN entities whose combined operations account for a vast majority of all UNCT funding available within particular countries. This "critical mass"[106] approach advocates closer collaboration of those few UN "large-spending" entities, in particular in the area of harmonising business practices, but also on the UNDAF as poverty-alleviation frameworks.

Finally, adaptation can also be analysed in terms of functional criteria that are connected to the specific tasks performed by a country representation. Since these are of particular importance in the case of the RC system, they are the focus of the next section.

105 One interviewee, for example, stated that "[t]*he push towards universality is a struggle"* (source: personal interview by the author, October 2012).

106 Compare the study by Lindores (2012), which has been prepared in preparation of the QCPR process on behalf of the UN Secretariat.

5.2 The different "hats" of the Resident Coordinator

In response to the specific demands and requirements placed before and upon it in different countries, a multifaceted RC system has evolved over time. In this regard, the historical example of assigning the RC function to the Resident Representative of UNDP through "double-hatting" can be seen to have set a precedent within the UN development system. It has subsequently been replicated on a number of occasions, to the extent that it is possible to speak of a trend of assigning additional functions and responsibilities to the RCs. Consequently, this has led to a situation that one interviewee described with the statement: *"half of the time, an RC is two to three things at the same time."*[107] The status of an RC as (generally) the most senior official of the UN at the country level seems to have been particularly appealing grounds for the General Assembly – but also for the Secretariat and UNDG – to put the capacity of the RC to use for other purposes, including some that clearly cross the boundary into areas outside the original area of focus, that is, "development".

Table 5: Adaptation patterns of the RC system

Label	Defining RC hat	Number of Countries
1. None	–	4
2. Standard	RC	58
3. Enhanced RC	DaO pilot	8
	DaO self-starter	25
4. Humanitarian Mission	HC	43
5. Integrated Mission	DSRSG etc.	15
6. Joint Office	Joint Office Representative	1

Note: Due to overlap of functions, categories are not mutually exclusive.

Source: Based on UNDG / UN DOCO (2012)

107 Personal interview by the author, September 2012.

On the basis of additional functions assigned to the RC function, there are at least six patterns of adaptation that can be distinguished. Apart from the "standard" or default case, which has been described and analysed above, as well as the case of partner governments having opted to coordinate UNCT activities themselves and where there has been no RC assigned as a result, four other adaptation patterns can be distinguished. The first relates to the group of countries following the "Delivering as One" model, which was established to pilot a different and much more closely integrated model of aid coordination. The combining of the RC function with the Humanitarian Coordinator hat in humanitarian contexts, and the assignment of the (Deputy) Special Representative of the Secretary-General function in the context of a political and/or peacekeeping mission ("integrated mission") entail significant modifications of the standard aid-coordination practices, which justify their inclusion in this list.

The final model constitutes the Joint Office model, which was started in 2006 in Cape Verde in an attempt to cut transaction costs by means of direct agency representation. Table 5 provides an overview of the six adaptation patterns (cf. also Lindores 2012), including a snapshot – as changes frequently occur – of the number of country cases where the different models are currently being applied. As has been pointed out before, double- or triple-hatting is a common practice, in particular for the HC and DSRSG functions, but applies to the other models as well, which means that there is significant overlap between the different models.[108] In addition, a significant degree of intra-group variation also exists, which complicates analysis further; for example, the DaO model has been built around the principle of "no one size fits all", and as a result none of the models look and function alike. This reality has also been recognised by the Secretary-General in one of his latest reports:

> *The Resident Coordinator system has generally been adapted to the practical considerations that arise in each programme country. Certain broader groupings have emerged, such as the "delivering-as-one" model and crisis and transition countries. Even within those groupings, however, the application of the key guidelines of the Resident Coordinator system can be quite different.* (UNSG 2012b, 28)

The following subsections explore the models in greater detail.

108 For example, following the establishment of the Joint Office in Cape Verde, the country also joined the group of countries piloting the "Delivering as One" model.

5.2.1 No Resident Coordinator

In many respects, the model of no RC constitutes an atypical case that has only been applied in a very limited number of countries. The two principal rationales for the model are either a UN presence that is too small to justify dispatching an RC (i.e. the size of the UNCT falls below the delivery threshold for an RC presence), or the partner government has made a request to that effect. The case applies in particular at times of transition and phasing-out of a UN engagement. As such, there are no specific provisions for the functioning of aid coordination and the workings of the UNCT under these circumstances. In principle the case of a government objecting to the appointment of an RC entails the government taking full ownership and responsibility for UN internal aid coordination, which, however, is generally aided by the fact that the UNCT presence tends to be rather small within the group of concerned countries. The model thus lends itself to country situations wherein a government's capacity to coordinate the UN (and other donors') engagement is developed and robust, and the intermediary RC function is no longer required. Poland is an example of a country where the government opted for not having any more RCs after the departure of the last officeholder in 2006. Because Poland is a high-income country and member of the EU (since 2004) and the OECD (since 2006) and since 1998 a provider of development assistance, only six UN entities that are acting in an advisory role to the government remained after the departure of the RC, and it is likely that the country-level presence will be phased out completely in the not too distant future.

5.2.2 Enhanced Resident Coordinator / Delivering as One

The DaO is a comprehensive reform initiative based on the four elements "one programme", "one budget", "one office" and "one leader". Stemming in part from earlier proposals for more effective collaboration among the ExCom agencies, the drive to ensure inclusiveness (see Section 5.1) eventually put at odds that objective though a significant enlargement of the group size. Currently, around 20 per cent of all UNCTs are implementing DaO or have indicated a willingness to do so in the near future (UNDG 2010, foreword). Given that "no one size fits all" had been established as one of the fundamental principles of the DaO initiative, there is a significant degree of intra-group variation within the eight original pilot countries, but in

particular among the 25+ so-called self-starter countries, which joined the bandwagon at a later stage. In order to account for the principle, the operational guidance documents for the RCs and UNCTs within DaO countries that were developed as a general rule had to provide rather broad guidance. This left operational details to be decided through inter-agency negotiations at the country level and tended to result in consensus at the level of the least-ambitious entity. A particular challenge with the DaO for the UN entities was that some of the new measures were introduced without much regard for existing procedures,[109] which meant additional work for RCs and UNCTs before processes were eventually harmonised.

Albeit much broader in focus on the basis of the original four principles, the establishment of an "enhanced RC" acting as the one leader was envisioned as a key component from the start. It has been pointed out that many of the DaO components had been around for some years and, to an extent, the DaO concept only consolidated and "rebranded" them in a more comprehensive package (Mueller 2010b, 39). This also holds true somewhat for the "one leader". However, a few elements distinguish the enhanced RC from the standard case:

- *Funding:* Formal authority for allocation decisions over funds from the pooled and unearmarked country-level "One funds";
- *Programming*: Final decision-making authority over priorities of the "one programme" in consultation with UNCT members in case of disagreement;
- *Dialogue:* Enhanced relations with partner-country government through participation in the "Joint DaO Steering Committees", which have been established in all pilot countries;
- *Visibility:* Greater prominence and visibility of the enhanced RC, including through centralised country-level fundraising mandate. In most DaO pilot countries, the UNCTs have voluntarily committed themselves to a "code of conduct" or signed a "memorandum of understanding" that gives the RC a more central position.

109 This relates in particular to the "one programme", which duplicated the earlier UNDAF process (Mueller 2010b, 40). Reporting requirements also duplicated existing procedures (Todd et al. 2012).

It is likely that the potential benefits of the DaO model are not distributed evenly and that the use of the model is therefore more appealing to certain countries than to others. Initial reactions to the High-Level Panel's proposal are particularly informative in this respect. Accordingly, whereas some of the larger developing countries – whose capacities to manage aid are rather strong – feared any new conditionalities and limitations arising from a more "united front" (more decentralised countries saw little benefit for themselves as well), it was smaller, more aid-dependent countries that saw the DaO model as an opportunity to reduce their transaction costs and receive a single entry point in dealing with the fragmented UN development system (Mueller 2010b, 38; Weinlich 2011a). In addition, there might have also been a certain expectation that they stood to benefit from increased donor contributions in support of the new initiative through participation in the DaO model[110] (Mueller 2010b, 40). The majority of the pilot countries such as Rwanda, Tanzania, Vietnam and Mozambique indeed fall into the described category (but not the exception, Pakistan).[111]

In addition, it also has to be kept in mind that participation in the DaO model was self-selected, which means that application of the DaO model has benefitted from strong government commitment to UN internal reform. This fact has also been attested to by the head of UNDG, Helen Clark, who stated: *"What makes the process around Delivering as One unique is that change is being driven from the country level up – fostering national ownership. Indeed, the process wouldn't get off the ground if host countries did not want it."*[112]

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110 Mueller (2010b, 40) points out that a key function of the multi-year "One budgetary frameworks" was to identify a funding gap for the overall engagement of the UN development system – unlike the UNDAF. In that sense, being used as a resource mobilisation tool was one objective closely tied to the introduction of the one budgets. The HLP had initially proposed a single budget (instead of a budget framework) based on the mandatory pooling of agency resources, however, this proofed politically not feasible

111 Severino / Ray (2010, 19 ff.) have advanced a similar argument along these lines, namely, that the Paris Declaration and aid-effectiveness principles (in a broad sense, the DaO can be subsumed under this category) have only very limited applicability for a larger group of developing countries.

112 Helen Clark, UNDG Chair, remarks at the Wilton Park conference on the future of the UN development system, 18 November 2010; online: http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/november/helen-clark-wilton-park-conference-on-future-of-the-un-development-system.en.

An independent evaluation of the DaO in 2012 found that the overall goals of the initiative are partially being achieved, albeit at the cost of higher transaction costs for the participating UN development system entities (Todd et al. 2012). One finding that bears particular relevance for the RC system has been that the introduction of the "One funds" in particular – which were in addition to agency resources (instead of pooling their funds, as was the original intent) – constituted a financial incentive that encouraged the participation of non-resident agencies, thus enlarging the size of the UNCTs (Todd et al. 2012, 10). This is at odds with the original concept of the model, which was intended to reduce complexity and fragmentation of activities at the country level (UN 2006, para. 16).

5.2.3 Humanitarian Coordinator

The double-hatting of the RC and the HC functions is a common practice that aims at forging coherence and coordination of two principally separate fields,[113] each with its own structures, processes and procedures. Since the humanitarian field underwent a drastic transformation in 2005, there are now many similarities to the development mechanisms. Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) are equivalent to the UNCT, but also include non-UN actors; and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is equivalent to UNDG (which also includes non-UN actors). The HC has a direct reporting responsibility to the head of the IASC, who is called the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). However, one major difference is that not all the members of the HCTs are equivalent, as there are cluster leads responsible for coordination in different humanitarian sectors. Finally, there are specific policies and guidelines that apply to the HC and the HCTs, which are distinct from the RC system guidelines. Since the focus of this paper is on the RC system, these are not discussed and analysed here in greater detail.

Principally, even when a double-hatting between the RC and the HC has been established, this does not mean that the humanitarian coordination machinery is replaced with that of the RC system, the UNCT, etc. Instead, the two mechanisms continue to coexist and function in parallel, but are linked at the top level through the single UN official. Current practice has it that

113 But note that WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA, as the largest agencies active in humanitarian assistance, are already all represented in UNDG. The only other major humanitarian actor within the UN development system that is not represented is UNRWA.

most HCs are also RCs to the extent that being an RC has become a *de facto* prerequisite for the HC post (Messina 2007).

Implications for the RC of being the appointed HC are not always straightforward – declaring a state of emergency in countries in the midst of a humanitarian crisis brings with it management and decision-making authority, which transcends what is commonly practiced or allowed in a standard development setting. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the leadership roles of Resident Coordinators and the teamwork within the United Nations Country Team are stronger in situations of transition from relief to development. As stated in the synthesis of the RC annual reports for 1999, there exists: *"a clear advantage to Resident Coordinators holding three positions – RC, RR and HC – as the added authority is needed to carryout activities in difficult situations"* (UNDG 1999, 3). A factor may be that more resources are available in such situations, including for coordination (UNSG 2011). On the other hand, the HC function entails a significant workload that can lead to prioritisation of the humanitarian tasks at the expense of the RC function, but in principle this could also go the other way around, in particular when the candidate has a stronger background with development, as is frequently the case. While this does not have a formal basis, there are also indications that the RC stands to gain in authority and peer recognition as a sort of side-effect resulting from his formal HC mandate and responsibilities, which include:

- *Accountability:* the HC has a direct reporting line to the Emergency Relief Coordinator within the UN Secretariat;
- *Broader mandate:* the HC coordinates all humanitarian actors which includes non-UN entities;
- *Funding*: HCs have additional authority in many countries as they manage the allocation of funds from substantial pooled funding mechanisms;
- *Capacity*: HCs have access to support capacities from OCHA field offices and there is some evidence that RCs also benefit from coordination support through the humanitarian window (Lindores 2012, 53).

The benefits and risks of double-hatting have been the subject of much debate, in particular within humanitarian circles. It is often opposed by NGOs, which see it as damaging to the humanitarian principles, in particular neutrality. Given that an HC is only appointed in a country where a state of humanitarian emergency has been declared, it follows that this model has only limited applicability.

5.2.4 Integrated mission

Integrated missions are established in all conflict and post-conflict situations where there is either a multidimensional peacekeeping or political mission in place. The main purpose of integration is to maximise the individual and collective impact of the UN's response by concentrating on those activities that are required to consolidate peace.[114] Within the context of an integrated mission, multi-hatting, that is, the combining of the DSRSG with the HC and RC functions, is the norm. From a practical perspective, this means that the RC has a "principal reporting line" to the SRSG, and two "secondary reporting lines" to the ERC as HC and to the chair of UNDG as RC. Accordingly, coordination in these contexts is multidimensional, it is much closer than in other contexts and it concerns development not as the only objective. These are the fundamental parameters for the RC system within the context of an integrated mission. The complex setup can invariably result in multiple conflicts of interest. Specific guidelines and policies have been developed to deal with any such potential challenges.[115]

Among integrated missions, the appointment of an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) constitutes a special case that signals an even higher level of integration among the different UN agenda in the development, peacebuilding and humanitarian fields based on a very comprehensive mandate and streamlined operational documents.[116]

As in the context of humanitarian missions, political and peacekeeping missions are certainly taking place in a context of weak state capacity, and sometimes also weak legitimacy, which results in a much more forceful and instrumental role of external actors such as the UN. As the Deputy of the SRSG, the RC or HC stands to benefit from the additional clout. The DSRSG position is normally also graded at the rank of Assistant Secretary-General, which is generally higher than the common grading for a standard RC position, thus adding weight to the position. In particular, in the contexts of integrated missions, the RC in the past has taken the lead in

114 UNSG (2008a); Decision 2008/24.

115 Note of Guidance on Relations between Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators of 17 January 2006.

116 Historically, there are only two examples of this case, which are the integrated peacebuilding missions in Burundi (BINUB, 2007–2011) and Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL, 2008–2010).

developing a development assistance framework that covers not just the UN but also includes the broader donor community, including the World Bank – this does not happen in the standard case. Integrated mission countries also take a higher share of overall UN development system funding, which adds to the additional authority of the RC. In a more formal sense, the RC system functioning differs from other contexts with regard to the following aspects:

- *Inferiority:* the RC is not the highest-ranking UN official at the country level and has to act under the overall authority of the SRSG, who heads the peacekeeping or political mission;
- *Integration:* all operational activities need to be reflected in an "integrated strategic framework" that relies on shared analysis as well as programming and planning. As a result, autonomous decision-making on programming is much constrained.

Applicability of this RC system model is limited to fragile countries with an integrated mission concept.

5.2.5 Joint office

The Joint Office model originates in the TCPR 2004 resolution and, as such, was established at the request of UN member states.[117] Its main objective is the rationalisation of country presence (i.e. agency field offices), which it aims to achieve on the basis of a single representation mechanism for several UN entities. In that sense, the Joint Office model is distinct from the "one office" under the DaO initiative (but it has probably been an inspiration for it), as the latter only aims to realise cost-savings through common services and premises of those agencies that are active in the DaO pilot countries, but keeps the representation structures intact. The original aim to move towards a fully integrated UN office proved difficult to achieve, as it was not possible to broaden the application beyond the four participating agencies, nor to overcome the vertical orientation of those agencies – in particular, the lacking interoperability of the management system. There are three basic principles for the model:[118]

117 General Assembly resolution A/RES/59/250 of 17 December 2004.

118 UNDG webpage; online: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1132 (accessed 15 June 2012).

- *one common programme*
- *one leader who is empowered and accountable*
- *one team working towards greater efficiency and effectiveness of programme and operations with shared support services to the extent possible*

Within these boundaries, different approaches towards the Joint Office model are possible and encouraged. While it was envisioned to be initially piloted in two countries (Cape Verde and Guyana) and eventually rolled out to at least 10, there currently exists just one Joint Office worldwide, which is in Cape Verde. It is led by one representative who is working on behalf of – and representing – the three participating agencies, which are UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (WFP used to be part of the group as well, but it withdrew later on for unknown reasons). The representative is also functioning as the RC in Cape Verde. In UNCT meetings with the other UN agencies present in Cape Verde, he / she is representing the three participating agencies.

The Joint Office model has encountered a number of challenges: first, it proved too difficult to develop a single and commonly owned system for business operations and processes to link to the agency systems. Eventually, the UNDP system was adopted for the Joint Office, which led, however, to continuous challenges and frustrations in the other agencies. This may also have been the reason why the plan to issue operational guidelines for the model was never realised.

A variation of the Joint Model, called the "Joint Presence", has been applied in the Pacific Islands region, where the same three agencies are currently collaborating on the basis of joint representation offices in some of the smaller island states.[119] As the goal is the decentralisation of operations and the eventual opening of full offices (upon which the representation offices would assumingly be abandoned), the Joint Presence constitutes a special case.

In general terms, the Joint Office model has the following features that distinguish it from the standard RC system model:

119 More information can be found on the UN Pacific webpage; online: http://www.pacific.one.un.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=155 (accessed 15 June 2012).

- *Representation:* through the personal union of the director of the Joint Office with the RC function, the RC has added weight in UNCT discussions. In a way, the model resembles a "stronger" form of structuring the relationship among the UNCTs, much as the director of the Joint Office represents the other agencies.
- *Common programming*: the agencies participating in the Joint Office prepare a common programme that is then integrated into the one programme or UNDAF that is prepared within the UNCT.

The goal of the Joint Office model is to balance the costs of field offices with those of programme budgets, for example by improving the ratio of programme to support costs. Given this focus on rationalising the UN development system country presence, the Joint Office model offers itself to application in particular in countries with a small UN development system presence, countries which tend to be either small countries or small island states.[120] Since neither operational guidelines nor common operational procedures or systems were developed, there are significant intra-agency challenges with this model. If these could be overcome, however, the Joint Office approach seems to be a beneficial and worthwhile adaptation pattern of the standard RC system that could be applied in other countries with a small UN development system presence.

5.3 Evolving patterns of UN aid coordination

The RC system is a very complex, multidimensional and multilayered system that sets high hurdles for a strategic approach towards adaptation. The analysis above suggests that there are numerous factors that differentiate existing adaptation patterns of the RC system, which can be summarised as follows:

a) degree of authority of RC system internally as well as externally;

b) country circumstances such as the size of the group of stakeholders, the country context and country income groups; and

c) the programme country government's approach towards UN internal aid coordination.

120 UNDP (2005), Executive Committee report to ECOSOC, E/2005/CRP.1, p. 3.

Table 8 provides an overview of the six models along these lines. There are a few conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

First, the size and composition of the UN presence on the ground (i.e. the UNCT) is a key determinant for adapting the RC system. Aid-coordination processes necessarily become more complex and transaction costs grow with increased participation. The analysis confirmed the existence of a trade-off between group size and effective aid coordination. To some extent, this can be counterbalanced by more authority (rank) and resources (staff, funding). The integrated mission as well as Humanitarian Coordinator models show that aid coordination can still function reasonably well in more complex compositions and with larger groups; however, this also requires a significantly strengthened authority of the RC, as well as strengthened capacities in the form of staff and funding.

Secondly, the evidence suggests that adaptation of the RC system to date has not taken place following the one predominant criterion in discussions about adaptation within, for example, the EU and the World Bank, namely country income group. Instead, the evolving pattern of adaptation within the RC system seems to follow a logic that is much closer to the profile of the UN development system more generally, which stands for a comprehensive and broad definition of development that goes beyond simpler measures of growth and per capita income. Such a pattern seems to be consistent with how development cooperation is being perceived within the UN development system. The MDGs, the concept of human development or more recent attempts to promote the concept of multidimensional poverty constitute a counterpoint to the more traditional criteria of income and growth that are advocated by the World Bank.

Thirdly, the analysis found that there is significant variation among the different models as to whether they are based on specific operational guidance or not. The enhanced RC (DaO) model seems to be a case in point. For other models, such as the HC and the DSRSG hats, distinct operational guidelines have been adopted that have resulted in significant institutional strengthening of the RC. The guidelines and policies for the standard RC system model thus seem to be sufficiently flexible to allow substantial variation of their application. The coordination needs of different countries vary greatly, which requires a certain flexibility of the RC system.

Finally, the analysis also brings out a more fundamental question, namely that of the boundaries of aid coordination. The UN development system as

a whole has a very broad mandate that, in addition to development-related operations, includes political missions, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, the advance of human rights among other activities. This broadness presents various opportunities for synergies and integrated action, but also challenges. The DSRSG and HC models to an extent are already crossing the boundaries of the UN development system. Against this background, there have been repeated discussions that the RC system – as the one element that is common in the majority of fields – should eventually be transformed into a "UN Ambassador" or "UN System Representative" position or given a similar label along those lines.

5.4 Future differentiation of UN aid coordination

> *In the longer term, I believe the United Nations should look at alternative models for its country-level activities. While we need to preserve the distinctive contribution of each United Nations agency, we should nonetheless explore different forms of United Nations presence at the national level.*
> Secretary-General in an Agenda for Further Change (UNGA 2002, 21)

The institutional setup of the RC system in different countries is a direct function of the broader question of where the UN development system should – or would want to – focus its engagements more generally. It has been established that the standard RC system model offers extensive flexibility for customisation and adaptation, and there is no reason why this should not continue to be the case in the future. The analysis also showed that the different RC system models are being applied in a broad variety of country contexts. Against this background, there are grounds for a defensive argument that further adaptation of the RC system might not be required. At the same time, the argument holds that when the context for development cooperation is undergoing fundamental change, the UN development system should adapt – or else will eventually be forced to adapt – its country-level business model; therefore, a more positive approach would be to engage in the process in a more strategic and proactive way. The author subscribes to the latter view.

According to Jenks (2012, 21), the UN development system is currently engaged in four types of countries:

d) fragile states

e) low-income countries still heavily dependent on external support

Table 6: Overview – Adaptation patterns of the Resident Coordinator system

				1. Authority of RC		2. Circumstances			3. Gov't Approach to UN coordination
Model	**Cases**	**Mandate**	**Functions**	**Internal**	**External**	**Group Size**	**Country Context**	**Country Income Group**	**Hands-on or Hands-off**
None	4	Dev (Policy Advice)	None	**Partner Country**	**Partner Country**	**Various** UNCT tends to be small	**Various** Tend to phase-out UN engagement	**Various** Tend to be MIC	**Hands-on** Gov't has strong role in all coordination incl. UN
Standard	58	Dev	RC, DO, (Director Info Center)	**Low-Medium** Voluntary coordination	**Various** No standard mandate for ext. coordination	**Various**	**Various** Tend to be LIC and MIC	**Various**	**Various**
Enhanced	8 (+25 self-starter)	Dev	RC, DO, (Director Info Center)	**Medium** More formalised authority due to DaO principles	**Various** 5x ext. coordination mandate, 1x none, 2x n/a	**Large** Built-in incentive to increase agency representation	**Various** Tend to be aid-dependent and small	**Various**	**Hands on** Governments closely involved through DaO Steering Committees

Humani-tarian	43	Dev, Hum	RC, HC DO, (Director Info Center)	**Medium** Added weight through double-hat and addi-tional capacity	**High** Mandate to coordi-nate de-velopment and hu-manitarian actors	**Large** Humani-tarian stake-holders outside UN	**Humani-tarian Crisis**	**LIC**	**Hands-off** Government capacity for aid management weak or non-existent
Integrat-ed Mis-sion	15	Pol Hum Dev	DSRSG, RC, DO, (HC), (Director Info Center)	**High** Added weight of political mission, mandate and high rank enhance authority	**High** DSRSG/H C/RC has broad coordina-tion mandate	**Large** Develop-ment and humani-tarian stake-holders	**Political Mission** transitional govern-ments, weak national capacity for aid coordina-tion	**Vast majority LIC**	**Hands-off** Government capacity for aid management weak or non-existent
Joint Office	Various	Dev	RC, DO	**Medium** Single represenata-tive for ExCom agencies	**None** but per-ceivable	**Small**	**Various** in particu-lar small countries and small island states	**Various** Tend to be LIC	**Hands-on** Governments have strong interest in UN aid coordination

Source: own compilation

f) middle-income countries with transition challenges

g) middle-income countries engaging with the challenges of globalisation

Based on the existing RC system models, two more common types can be added, which are:

h) small countries and small island states

i) countries facing humanitarian crises

Comparing the existing RC system models with this – admittedly simplifying – list, the following arguments can be made:

- First, in the context of fragile states where a political or peacekeeping mission is established, or for countries facing humanitarian crises, the integrated mission and Humanitarian Coordinator models would automatically apply.
- Second, given its primary objectives which are the reduction of fragmentation, the enhanced RC (DaO) model seems to be an appropriate fit, particularly for low-income countries that are still heavily dependent on external support.
- Third, for the majority of middle-income countries, the standard RC system model applies. The UN development system experience with middle-income countries is broad; of the 132 countries where UNCTs are present, two-thirds fall into that category (UNDG 2010, 3).
- Fourth, there could be grounds for the argument that the UN development system is currently lacking an RC system model to deal with the particular situations of middle-income countries facing the challenges of globalisation.
- Fifth, in the case of small countries and small island states or middle-income countries with a relatively limited UNCT presence, the Joint Office model could be applied. Given that the model is currently only being applied in a very limited number of countries, this would signify a substantial expansion of the model. For that, an agreement on specific operational guidelines would be required.

6 Conclusions: Taking the Resident Coordinator system forward

Individual UN agencies, funds and programmes have countless achievements to show for their development impact and success. At the same time, it is equally true that the UN development system collectively "punches below its weight". The fragmented nature of what sometimes has also been referred to as the UN development "non-system" – driven by strong centrifugal forces and an impeding funding system that propels complexity and overlap among the UN entities – is seen to be at the roots of this status quo.[121] In order to make headway towards a more coherent UN engagement at the country level, and against the background of the broader aid-effectiveness debates, member states and UN agencies, funds and programmes have resolved to strengthen and improve aid-coordination mechanisms, in particular at the country level. This is the background for ongoing reforms of the RC system.

As the "lynchpin of field coordination", the RC system has been of fundamental importance for the functioning of the UN development system at the country level since its inception in the late 1970s. This study concludes that under certain conditions, which are outlined below, it may as well play a critical role in the future positioning of the UN development system.

The study at hand aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role and functioning of the RC system as the main mechanism for country-level aid coordination within the UN development system. Based on the analysis of the larger context, organisational setup, historical development, current practice and evolving adaptation patterns of the RC system, a number of broad conclusions and recommendations have been derived. They are presented in this chapter, which focusses on four crucial areas, the first three of which roughly correspond to the main chapters of this study, with the final section drawing some overarching conclusions: 1) role, mandate and functioning of the RC system; 2) the management of the RC system; 3) decentralisation of the UN development system; and 4) issues surrounding the question of its proper division of labour.

121 Compare outcomes of an international expert workshop on the UN development system organised by the Future of the UN Development System project in May 2012, summarised in Mahn (2012b).

6.1 Role, mandate and functioning of the RC system

The role, mandate and functioning of the RC system have undergone significant changes and evolutions over time. A system whose essential elements are in flux is very much characteristic of the situation today. Stakeholder perceptions about the future form and design of the RC system are diverse – and to an extent conflicting – thereby reflecting competing national and organisational interests. To an extent, coordination is only partly a technical question. In fact, many debates only mask deep-running conflicts of competing interests and disaccord among member states about the role, functioning and future direction of the UN development system.

As the analysis has shown, this disaccord has affected operational and policy guidelines provided for the RC system, which, in aiming to square the circle, have evolved in an additive fashion and are today characterised by ambivalence and ambiguity. The study identified four areas of particular discord, which relate to the mandate, coverage, authority and orientation of the RC role.

Discord around the mandate of the RC boils down to the question of whether or not RCs should be furnished with an agenda for normative advocacy, including on human rights, combined with a discrete mandate to engage on political issues that transcend the immediate demands of the UNCT members and partner governments. It is consensual that the UN development system and the RC do not need to pursue a follow-up to the norms and standards set by UN global conferences "*on demand"* only. The practice of double- or triple-hatting the RC function with leadership roles, in particular for political or peacekeeping missions, has already blurred the boundaries between the different silos of the UN's engagement. UN internal intricacies of separate functions for the same person are lost on donor partners and governments. To an extent, these shifts have not yet been fully and formally acknowledgment by member states, which makes the RC system vulnerable to reproach and criticism. It is therefore recommended that member states forge a new consensus about the extent and magnitude of RCs engagement in political and normative concerns, including institutional implications regarding the appropriate mechanism(s) to reconcile competing demands placed upon the RC system.

As far as coverage is concerned, the RC system serves as a key instrument of integration within the UN development system, playing a crucial "bridg-

ing" function between the multiple areas of work of the United Nations that extend beyond the traditional realms of "operational activities for development". On the basis of multiple hats, the RC system is already serving to integrate more closely two to three of the traditional "silos" within the UN, namely development, humanitarianism and, albeit to a lesser degree, peacekeeping, with further collaboration on normative and political issues under discussion. In that sense, the RC system could be seen to move UN aid coordination "beyond development". This evolution is generally perceived positively, as it allows for a much more comprehensive engagement of the UN at the country level that fully takes advantage of the UN system's comparative strength, which is the unique linkage between operational and normative activities. It is recommended that member states should encourage further system-wide integration by focussing in particular on strengthening the functional aspects of the RC system – coordination and representation – which are independent of the particular sector of engagement. Depending on whatever mandate configuration will eventually be assigned to the RCs, a secondary implication of this is the urgent and crucial need for proper interfacing with agencies responsible for, and interacting with, the RC system, with a view towards its transformation into a representative and adequate interface for all stakeholders beyond the immediate realms of "development". In the recent past, one of the consequences of the RC system moving "beyond development" has been a growing discrepancy between those that are affected by decisions, and those that are represented during the decision-making process, which urgently needs to be addressed.

In terms of authority, the vertical setup of the UN development system has been found to be responsible for the continuous mismatch between what the RC system is able to accomplish for system-wide coherence, and the expectations placed upon it. Addressing this mismatch would necessitate empowering the RC, both in terms of capacities as well as competencies. In addition to boosting funding and support, capacity would particularly benefit from the RC system becoming a magnet for the "best and brightest" candidates coming from both within as well as from outside the UN system. Based on a system-wide – instead of an agency – career path, the RC position needs to be regarded as one of the top-notch opportunities within the UN system. Strengthening the competencies of the RC would form part of what is necessary to make the position more attractive. The introduction of a matrix reporting arrangement for UNCT members to report to both the RC as well as their individual agency heads would be another positive step

towards putting the relationship between the RC and the UNCT members on stronger footing.

Finally, concerning the appropriate balance between internal and external orientation, the analysis suggested that the inward focus on UN aid coordination constitutes the clear priority of the RC function, with the coordination of and with bi- and multilateral donor agencies taking place as a mere afterthought. This contrasts with the prominent role it is being granted by partner countries. As the external aid-coordination role has a strong potential to leverage activities and debates in line with UNCT priorities – as well as to serve as a necessary interface for the UN development system to engage with broader debates – it is recommended that the RC capacity to administer and utilise leadership positions in external aid coordination is reinforced.

As a bottom line, the functioning of the RC system would be significantly advanced if member states were to forge a new consensus about the core and mandatory functions of the RC, while retaining a broad degree of flexibility for adapting its role to different country contexts.

6.2 Management of the RC system

One of the main findings coming out of the study is the pivotal role that UNDP plays for the proper functioning of the RC system, and UN country-level aid coordination more broadly. Unrivalled within the UN development system, UNDP prides itself on its large country presence as well as its mandate for system-wide coordination and service provision functions, making it the "primus inter pares" among all the UN development entities. The management of the RC system has been an attribute of UNDP for such a long period that – to many within and outside the organisation – it has become an essential element of its identity. Indeed, having served as the *de facto* central funding authority within the UN development system, UNDP during its early years was well positioned and qualified to manage the aid-coordination function. However, as a result of the structural changes in the UN funding system that have donors focussing ever more narrowly on the earmarking of contributions for specific purposes, the conditions and context of UNDP's management role are remarkably different today. Exercising a dual function of being operationally active, while at the same time providing coordination and other system-wide services, has its inher-

ent challenges for the UNDP management of the RC system. In particular, perceived or actual conflicts of interest that arise from the current model have a persistently detrimental effect on the functioning of the RC system. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are four principal options conceivable to address this challenge, which are:

- The "status-quo" option: this option favours the full implementation of established technical measures such as the functional firewall and the MAS to more clearly delineate UNDP and RC roles, while preserving the two-tiered mandate of UNDP.
- The "system-wide coherence" option: in line with earlier reform proposals, this option favours a continued anchoring of the RC management within an operationally active UNDP, which, however, would have to reconfigure its areas of activity so as to avoid compromising its coordination role.
- The Secretariat option: this option would see the management of the RC system being anchored within the UN Secretariat.
- The independent institution option: a final option would call for the establishment of a new entity independent of the funds, programmes, agencies to manage the RC system.

Each of these options has its inherent challenges, opportunities and associated feasibility. As the historical analysis in Chapter 4 has shown, the RC system has seen several attempts at implementing elements of the latter two options on a number of occasions within the history of the UN development system, albeit with little success. Accordingly, after 40 years of evolution of the UN development system, the assessment by Joan Anstee and Robert Jackson in the famous Capacity Study of 1969, that *"it should be accepted that UNDP provides the best foundation on which a coordinating organization could be based"* may well continue to hold. At the same time, if doubts about UNDP's independence in the management of the RC system continue to be cast, member states may be forced to re-examine its future positioning at some point. In order to address persistent conflicts or perceptions of conflicts of interests in the RC management, the "system-wide coherence" option offers a clear, but also more politically challenging opportunity for grounding the RC system in UNDP as a strong organisation that has both operational and system-wide functions without being burdened by mandate overlap and conflicts with other entities within the UN development system.

As a second-best option that at the same time has a higher political feasibility, member states should push with renewed vigour for a full implementation of the MAS and the firewall in pursuit of a functional separation of the two mandates of UNDP.

6.3 Decentralisation of UN aid coordination

Differentiation of the UN development system engagement in partner countries generally does not follow a globally coordinated strategy. There is equally no consensus among UN member states and within the UN development system about the future shape and composition of the UN country-level presence in its entirety. The presence of UN entities in individual partner countries, as well as the particular composition of the UNCT, continues to result from the joint decision-making processes of individual UN funds, agencies and programmes together with partner governments, on the basis of a variety of individually established criteria.

Adaptation of the RC system has to be seen in direct response to this process, as the RC system has, in practice, been applied differently in different country and UNCT contexts. As suggested by the debates about the new geography of poverty, country situations are becoming ever more differentiated, and it is reasonable to assume that the pressure on the RC system to adapt even further is bound to increase as well. In the past, adaptation processes of the RC system have evolved in a rather erratic fashion, which exposed opportunities that could potentially be exploited in the future. In order to do so, this study makes some broad recommendations for member states to review and develop further in the form of specific policy guidance to the UN development system.

First, it was found that in order to enhance UNCT alignment towards evolving partner-country needs and requirements, the agency-driven decision-making process needed to be counterbalanced to an extent by bringing a more strategic orientation to the UN development system. Accordingly, it is suggested that RCs be given a role in the decision-making process regarding the particular composition and size of the UNCT, taking into account and conveying the development needs of the partner country, and advising the partner government accordingly. Decentralising the ruling over the UNCT country presence would run counter to supply-driven tendencies of the UN's engagement.

Second, the particular shape of the RC model to be applied in a given country context should be decided upon with due regard to cost-benefit considerations and the benefits of flexibility, following the logic of an aid-coordination model that is *"*as light as possible, and as heavy as necessary*"*. The Joint Office model has shown particular potential for more widespread application, in particular in small countries and small island states, but also middle-income countries with a relatively small-scale UN presence and engagement. Based on a thorough assessment of its benefits and also remaining challenges, member states should give the model some serious consideration.

Third, such an approach would necessitate a reconsideration of conflicting guidelines for the RC system, which relates in particular to the inclusiveness principle by which member states established that the functioning of the RC system be fully participatory. Notwithstanding the valuable contribution of all UN entities, including those with non-resident status, marginal benefits of widespread participation requirements have to be balanced with added coordination costs and capacity strains being put on the RC system. There exists a practical trade-off between advances in coordination, and enhanced participation beyond a certain UNCT size. Against this background, there seems to be a need for more flexible approaches that neither describe universal inclusiveness requirements nor focus only on a pre-determined set of agencies. Whereas a coordination-intensive model might continue to be justified in a country context where the volume of UN engagement is substantial in overall comparison – these tend to be low-income and fragile states – a country with a relatively smaller presence would require lighter structures only, and there may be instances where it makes sense that assistance is delivered outside of the common programming frameworks. In particular, the "inclusiveness" principle that is underlying the RC system should be reviewed with the purpose of replacing it with a new "subsidiarity" norm of determining coverage for the purpose of aid-coordination processes – such as, for example, the joint programming through the UNDAF – in a flexible and country-level-based manner implemented through RC leadership.

Finally, the decentralisation of decision-making power to the RC should be accompanied by a parallel drive towards the harmonisation of business practices at the global level. In particular, common systems for the management of human and financial resources are seen as an indispensable foundation for the outlined decentralisation of UN aid-coordination processes.

6.4 UN aid coordination and the division of labour

The primary objective of UN country-level aid coordination and the RC system is to bring coherency and consistency to the UN development system. In recent years, there has been a strong focus on this approach as being a pragmatic and politically feasible way of maximising overall effectiveness and efficiency. As postulated, coordination gains have to outweigh their costs. Although it has been suggested elsewhere that the returns on UN aid-coordination investments are still positive, member states are increasingly realising that the current approach is reaching its limits. This is in line with opinions of interviewees from within the UN development system who stressed that *"aid coordination is all we* [meaning the UN agencies, funds and programmes] *have*", but that member states should not *"overdo coordination"*.[122]

First, it is one of the conclusions of this study that it is a very challenging task to attempt to bring together – by means of country-level aid coordination through the RCs – the UN development system, which the UN member states over the course of nearly 70 years have designed in a complex and fragmented manner. From a theoretical perspective, a course of action that aims to tackle the incoherency challenge by predominantly relying on aid-coordination mechanisms may therefore only represent a "second-best" option. As it stands, the nature of the UN development system, which member states have created and which RCs are tasked to coordinate at the country level, is characterised by such complexity and diverse circumstances that the marginal benefit of increases in coordination comes at the cost of increases in transaction costs at the agency, inter-agency and system-wide levels. It thus follows that structural reforms at the global level of UN agencies, funds and programmes aimed at establishing a clearer division of labour and less mandate overlap could effectively pre-empt country-level coordination challenges, and would therefore have to be given priority. In fact, a number of the challenges that the RC system is supposed to mitigate within the UN development system would be much less pronounced if some of its attributes were directly addressed by member states. The consolidation of four entities working on gender- and women's advancement to form UN Women in 2010 set a commendable precedent, which could be pursued further in other sectors as well. Previous studies at DIE have discussed and analysed

122 Personal interviews by the author, October–December 2012.

the main reform options that have been developed in the past (Weinlich 2011b).

Given the incentives for a steady expansion of entity mandates resulting from prevailing funding mechanisms, it is further concluded that implementation of any such reforms would necessitate member states to establish new and innovative mechanisms for funding the UN development system that would potentially go "beyond aid" by tapping into other sources of funding available. To be sure, such fundamental reforms do not seem likely, as there has not been much political interest among member states in recent years. A more realistic perspective is that there will be a continuous process of "muddling through". At the same time, a suitable opportunity for UN member states to address some of the more delicate intricacies of the UN development system and to establish a global division of labour might arise in the aftermath of the two reform processes aimed at establishing future development targets, that is, the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 framework, which – it has been agreed – are supposed to replace the Millennium Development Goals. Both processes, if agreed by member states, will likely establish new objectives and a sense of purpose for the UN development system from which impulses to align its form and function – including the RC system and UN country-level aid-coordination setup – are expected as well.

6.5 Outlook

The future of the RC system is closely intertwined with that of the UN (development) system more broadly. The fundamental question that member states have been struggling to come to terms with since the UN's establishment is the question of commonality and distinction of the individual UN entities, which, together, form the UN development system. According to the Secretary-General:

> *The question that requires thorough examination is when is leverage maximized by the system working as a system, when by individual agencies acting individually and when do specific configurations need to be tailored to the specific issue at hand. It is improbable that there is a one-size-fits-all prescription for maximizing leverage.* (UNSG 2012b, 15)

Given the political impasse for more comprehensive reforms, reform efforts in recent years have been particularly focussed on operational matters at the

country level. The existing "expectations-capabilities gap" of the RC system can to a large degree be attributed to the fact that the RC system has become a shadow battlefield of sorts where different stakeholder conceptions about the future of the UN development system – in response to the fundamental question posed above – are played out. It is only slowly that member states are coming to terms with the fact that an approach predominantly focussed on the country level is incomplete. Whereas a functioning RC system at the country level has been deemed key for a functioning UN system, taking the RC system forward will require member states to take bold and all-encompassing steps towards stronger coherence among UN funds, programmes and agencies at the global level as well. It is only through concerted actions encompassing both the country-level operations and structural deficiencies existent at the global level that a true development "system" that unites the individual funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations will be forged.

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Annexes

Annex 1: The composition of the UN development system

Specialised agencies (14)		
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
International Telecommunications Union (ITU)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
Universal Postal Union (UPU)	World Health Organization (WHO)	World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	
Funds and programmes (14)		
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	UNDP – UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)	UNDP – UN Volunteers programme (UNV)
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	UN Population Fund (UNFPA)	World Food Programme (WFP)
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
UNCTAD – International Trade Centre (ITC)	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	

Research and training institutions (6)		
UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)	UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)	UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)	UN System Staff College (UNSSC)	UN University (UNU)
Others (3)		
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS)	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)	UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Annex 2: List of people interviewed [123]

1	Douglas Allen	Management Specialist UN Volunteers, formerly with DOCO
2	Marco Baumann	Special Assistant to the Director, DOCO
3	Petra Lantz de Bernardis	Resident Coordinator and Head of Joint Office, Cape Verde
4	Ysabel Blanco	Strategic Policy Adviser to the Executive Director, UNFPA
5	Stephen Browne	Future of the UN development system (FUNDS) project, former RC in Ukraine and Rwanda
6	John Burley	Formerly with UNCTAD, UNPD and the Office of the Director-General for Development / Office of the Director for Int. Economic Co-operation
7	Leelananda De Silva	Independent Consultant, Sri Lanka
8	Christopher Davids	Senior Advisor on UN Coherence, UNICEF
9	Richard Dictus	Resident Coordinator, Malawi
10	Beate Elsässer	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Switzerland
11	Sally Fegan-Wyles	Acting Head of UNITAR, former Director of DOCO, former RC in Tanzania
12	Francesco Galtieri	Portfolio Manager UN Volunteers, formerly with DOCO
13	Karina Gerlach	Former Chief, USG Office, Department for Political Affairs, UN Secretariat
14	Kristinn Helgason	Chief (a.i.) Development Cooperation Policy Branch, DESA
15	Valentine Hoschet	Policy Specialist, DOCO
16	Jonna Jeurlink	External Relations Specialist, UNFPA
17	Marie-Therese Karlen	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Switzerland
18	Henriette Koetter	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)

123 The author is grateful to all people interviewed for their valuable contributions and time. The usual caveat applies: all mistakes and opinions remain the authors' and none of the people or institutions listed here are responsible in any way for the content of this study.

19	Dr. Simon Koppers	Head of division for United Nations affairs, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)
20	Marta Lanzoni	Policy Specialist, DOCO
21	Douglas Lindores	Independent consultant, Ontario, Canada
22	Andrew MacPherson	Development Cooperation Policy Branch, DESA
23	Claire Messina	Senior Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordination System Strengthening Unit, OCHA
24	Cécile Molinier	Former Head of UNDP Geneva Office and former RC of Sao Tome and Principe, Togo, and Mauritania
25	Flavia Pansieri	Executive Director, UN Volunteers and former RC in Yemen
26	Julian Pfaefflin	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)
27	Erik Ringborg	Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations
28	Juergen Schmid	Deputy head of division for United Nations affairs, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)
29	Peter Silberberg	Minister Counsellor, Head of Economic Department, Permanent Mission of Germany
30	Hendrik Schmitz-Guinote	Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Germany
31	Michael von der Schulenburg	Former Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) / HC / RC / RR in Sierra Leone
32	Dr. Silke Weinlich	Researcher and project leader, Käte Hamburger Kolleg (Center for Global Cooperation Research)
33	Pio Wennubst	Head of Development section, Permanent Mission of Switzerland

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