



UN TRANSITIONS PROJECT

Sustaining Peace and Development Beyond Mission Withdrawal

DCO-DPO-DPPA-UNDP

Annual report July 2020 – June 2021

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This last year has been a pivotal one for UN transitions and the UN Transitions Project: UNIOGBIS in Guinea-Bissau closed in December 2020; UNAMID in Darfur withdrew amidst a national transition process and the establishment of the new Special Political Mission UNITAMS; MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo started its withdrawal from the Kasais and has intensified transition planning in other provinces. In addition to providing direct support and technical expertise to these processes, the UN Transitions Project continued creating policy-practice feedback loops in support of organizational learning, and advanced early transition planning through the development of Transition Roadmaps in countries like Lebanon, Iraq, and South Sudan.

These efforts all took place during the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the well-being and livelihoods of communities across the world, especially in conflict affected and fragile states. For the UN, COVID-19 related restrictions have had an immediate effect on transition planning. Engagement with national stakeholders has become more challenging and UN coordination capacities have been stretched. While the peak of the outbreak is hopefully behind us, COVID-19 will certainly have a long-term impact on our ability to consolidate peacebuilding gains. In this context, early and joint transition planning has never been more critical.

A more pro-active, integrated and forward-looking approach to UN transitions will provide an opportunity to re-energize and re-focus our shared commitment in support of societies as they struggle to overcome violent conflict and build durable peace. To this end, the UN Transitions Project continues to be an essential mechanism that brings the UN and its partners together to carve out needed strategies. With the generous support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Project continues to provide targeted country support, including through the deployment of Transition Specialists, the organization of specialized trainings, and the development of guidance and lessons-learned studies. At the global level, the Project plays a key role in strengthening operational and policy coherence across pillars, including through its support to the 2020 Integration Review and the roll-out of the 2019 Secretary-General's Transition Planning Directive. Recognizing that UN transition planning is about leveraging the role, expertise, and capacities of national and international partners to address peace and development issues, the Project has made important steps to build new partnerships for transitions: only through partnerships can we truly make sure that transitions are sustainable.

Looking ahead, the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2594 on UN Transitions in September 2021 created a special momentum for UN Transitions. Together with our Project partners, DPO, DPPA, and UNDP, we will continue to work with our leadership, host governments, and Member States to ensure this momentum is sustained and that early and integrated transition planning remains a top priority for the Organization and its partners. We owe this to the many people in war-torn countries, trying to build societies where peace is sustained and durable development is possible.

On behalf of the UN Transitions Project Steering Committee (DCO, DPO, DPPA & UNDP):



Robert Piper
Assistant Secretary-General
UN Development Coordination Office



“ A more pro-active, integrated and forward-looking approach to UN transitions will provide an opportunity to re-energize and re-focus our shared commitment in support of societies as they struggle to overcome violent conflict and build durable peace. To this end, the UN Transitions Project continues to be an essential mechanism that brings the UN and its partners together to carve out needed strategies.

UN missions, while among the most effective tools to promote and maintain international peace and security, are temporary measures. The ability of the UN to promote sustainable development and peace is impacted considerably by the way that mission closure is planned and managed and how remaining actors are prepared for the post-mission phase. If well-managed, UN transitions can result in the re-orientation of the UN strategy and footprint to respond to the most pressing needs, thereby allowing effective support to countries emerging from violent conflict. If ill planned, UN transitions carry the risk of jeopardizing hard-won gains and may result in renewed violence.

The last decade saw the withdrawal of several multi-dimensional UN missions, including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Haiti and Côte d'Ivoire, and most recently Sudan and Guinea-Bissau. Looking ahead, large-scale UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic have been asked to initiate or intensify transition planning. These future transition processes are increasingly taking place in contexts characterized by complex political dynamics and protracted humanitarian, development, peace and security challenges, which may persist post-mission. Moreover, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges to successful transition planning, including by limiting the UN's ability to engage national stakeholders, maintain momentum for transition planning, and the availability of donor funding for peacebuilding. Responding to these changing dynamics therefore requires the UN to develop new approaches and partnerships for UN transitions.

“Transitions represent some of the most critical periods during which investments in sustaining peace made by national authorities and their international partners over the years can be either sustained or lost in a matter of months”.

- UN Secretary-General, **António Guterres**



© UN Photo/Harandane Dicko - Mali

“ Since its establishment, the UN Transitions Project has been an important driver behind the UN’s approach to manage UN transitions. Drawing on the Project’s assistance and advice, UN presences have managed to look beyond the immediate task of ‘mission exit’ and instead, are convening around common priorities to sustain peacebuilding gains that support government frameworks. Over the years we have learned many lessons about transitions, and our joint Project is helping us to maximize critical success factors, address emerging challenges and avoid common pitfalls. It has also helped improve the UN’s work across the peace and security and development pillars; making this Project truly unique.

– Ms. Rania Dagash – Chief, Policy and Best Practices
Service DPET, Department of Peace Operations

In 2014, UNDP, DPO, and DPPA initiated this Project to ensure that UN transitions result in a better positioning of the UN and its partners to support host countries move from conflict to sustainable peace and development.

The UN Transitions Project is a key mechanism that brings the UN system together to address recurring transition challenges: direct country support has improved the way UN transition processes are planned and managed. Identifying and sharing lessons has helped build good practices and closed knowledge gaps. Its convening role has strengthened operational and policy coherence to make support to the field more effective. Taken together, the Project has helped the UN and its partners to evolve their thinking and strategies away from a narrow focus on mission exit towards a more proactive and forward-looking approach that places emphasis on the reconfiguration of the entire UN country presence.

With the start of the current project phase (2020 - 2023), the Development Coordination Office (DCO) has joined the as the fourth partner entity. By serving the UN system as a ‘one-stop-shop’ on transition planning and management, the Project is responding to the increased demand for transition planning support and centralizes capacities and expertise from across its project partners to provide system-wide integrated assistance. In its current phase, the Project is placing a particular focus on institutionalizing lessons learned since the launch of this initiative.

2.1 UN TRANSITIONS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Project objectives

Our goal is to ensure that UN transitions result in host nations being better equipped to consolidate peacebuilding gains. We do so by supporting the UN system to plan and manage transitions in a proactive, integrated and forward-looking way and enhance the capacity of and collaboration with key national, regional, and international partners who are critical to sustain peace beyond mission withdrawal.

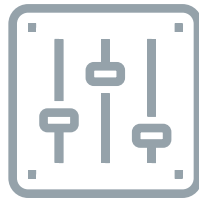
Outcome 1

The UN in transition settings adapts its strategy and footprint in a more pro-active, integrated, and forward-looking manner to support transitions.



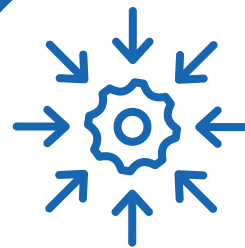
Outcome 2

UN transitions are increasingly prioritized and institutionalized within the UN system in a manner reflecting a more effective approach to transition processes.



Outcome 3

Key member states, regional organizations, IFIs & other partners increasingly collaborate with the UN on transitions.



Outcome 4

Host governments, (sub) regional organizations and bilateral partners increasingly collaborate with the UN on transitions in priority countries.

Project Support Modalities



Transition Specialists
deployed to Integrated
Offices and RCOs



Short-term deployments
and missions to support
key UN transition
deliverables



Knowledge and practice
building through trainings
and workshops



Facilitating peer-to-
peer exchanges on
UN transitions



Gathering lessons and
best practices from the
field



Improving policies and
their implementation

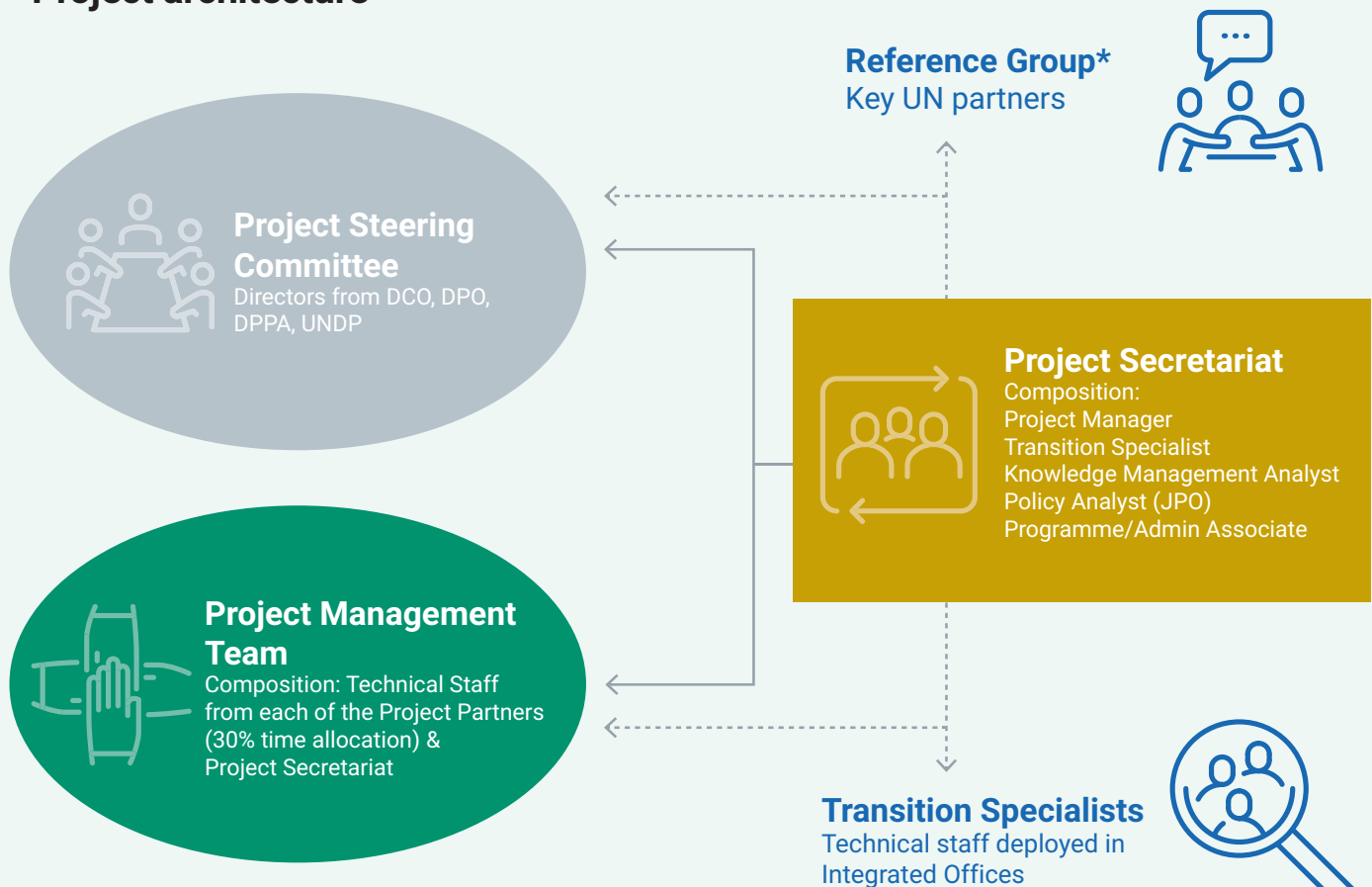


Building partnerships
for UN transitions

**UN Transitions
Project
partners:**



Project architecture



Budget:

LAUNCHED
IN **2014**

Donors:
SIDA & UK FCDO





© UN Photo/
Albert Gonzalez Farran

In 2020-2021, the Project has scaled up its support to UN transition planning and management, both at UNHQ and in the field. Due to Covid-19, the Project had to adjust some of its activities and has improved its delivery of remote technical support and sharing of lessons and guidance through virtual engagement. Thanks to these measures, the Project was able to continue supporting ongoing UN transition processes (e.g. DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Sudan), while also contributing to early transition planning through the articulation of Transition Calendars in other mission settings (e.g. Afghanistan, CAR, Iraq, Lebanon and South Sudan)

The Project has helped ensure that pro-active and integrated UN transitions are increasingly prioritized within the Organization and among Member States. To achieve this, the Project has (1) supported the behavioral insights component of the Review of UN Integration and is now leading on the implementation of recommendations, (2) facilitated dialogue and engagement with Security Council members, the EOSG, the Executive Committee and Deputies Committee and UN country back-stopping mechanisms on systemic issues that undermine successful transitions, (3) sensitized and supported UNHQ and field colleagues on the implementation of the SG's Planning Directive.

The Project has organized various peer-to-peer exchanges, trainings and other learning opportunities to enhance knowledge and practice, including by documenting best practices and lessons and disseminating these in a more systematic and engaging way. It has also incorporated a 'transition lens' into existing policies, guidance and analysis across different thematic areas, such as gender, DDR/SSR, Rule of Law and Protection of Civilians.

While progress has been impacted by Covid-19, the Project has set up initiatives that aim to make transition planning less UN-centric. In the DRC and Guinea-Bissau, the Project has been able to sensitize and train UN Missions and UN Country Team staff on enhancing national ownership and has helped put strategies in place to align transition planning to national priorities. In addition, new partnerships have been established to target a broader audience and increase the role of non-UN stakeholders in transition processes. This includes new initiatives with the European Union and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC).



© UN Photo/Sylvain Liechi - DRC

Overall, the Project's contributions to organizational learning, practice building and partnerships are central to making sure that the capacities and knowledge built become fully institutionalized and more sustainable.

Fostering dialogue and engagement with Member States

Increased engagement and facilitated dialogue among the UN Security Council and non-UN stakeholders to strengthen their support and role to UN transition settings.

Improving policies and their roll-out

Supported the roll-out of the 2019 Secretary-General's Planning Directive on UN Transitions for integrated mission settings.

Increasing national ownership

Worked with UN leadership in the DRC and Guinea-Bissau to plan and manage UN transitions with national stakeholders.

Ensuring gender responsive transitions

Supported gender transition programming in Guinea-Bissau and trained DRC Mission and UNCT staff on integrating gender priorities into the DRC Transition Plan.

Promoting the role of regional organizations in UN transitions

New collaborations with the EU and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre to analyse ways to increase coordination with Regional Organizations.



Initiating early transition planning

Supported UN Missions and UN Country Teams with the development of Integrated Transition Roadmaps in CAR, DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali and South Sudan.

Strengthening integration between UN Missions and UN Country Teams

Inclusion of behavioral-insight lens in the 2020-21 Integration Review and system-wide support to the implementation of the Review's findings.

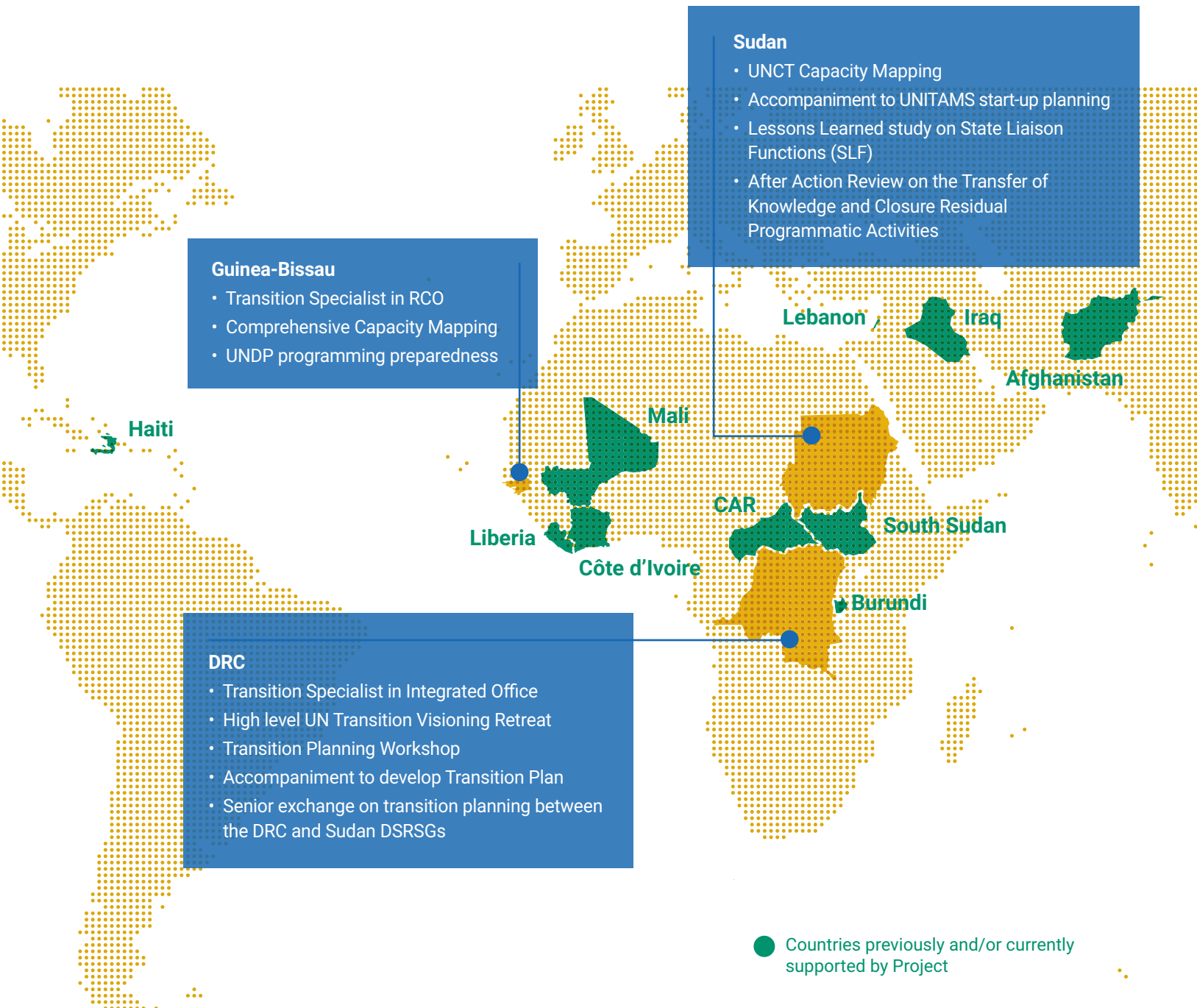
Developing practical guidance for the field

Translated policies and lessons into practical guidance for the field, including on Protection of Civilians, Rule of Law and DDR.

Enhancing knowledge and organizational learning

Identified lessons from previous transitions, including Sudan, and organized peer-to-peer learning events to inform future UN transitions.

2020 and 2021 saw the closure of UN Missions in Guinea-Bissau and Sudan/Darfur. In the DRC transition planning was intensified, while in other contexts early transition planning efforts have been initiated. In these settings the Project provides country support through the deployment of Transition Specialists, the provision of trainings, guidance and accompaniment. Beyond these priority countries, the Project has engaged other UN Missions and UN Country Teams (Afghanistan, CAR, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali and South Sudan) to initiate early transition planning, primarily through the development of Integrated Transition Calendars.



4.1 Country Support Overview

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

Transition process overview

In response to Security Council Resolution 2502 (2019), the Government of the DRC and MONUSCO engaged in a series of discussions on the priorities and future activities of the Mission, with the aim of developing a joint vision for the phased, responsible, and sustainable drawdown and withdrawal of MONUSCO. While the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has posed considerable challenges to these consultations, on 19 October 2020 the *Joint Strategy on the Progressive and Phased Drawdown of MONUSCO (S/2020/1041)* was endorsed. Thanks to the establishment of a joint MONUSCO-Government working group, this strategy was further refined and developed into a Transition Plan which outlines key benchmarks and the practical modalities of this phased withdrawal of MONUSCO.

Project support

As per Security Council Resolution 2556 (2020), the next step in the DRC's transition planning process is to operationalize the Joint Strategy into a Transition Plan. At the request of the SRSG, the Project designed and facilitated a **High-Level Transition Visioning and Planning Retreat** for UNCT and MONUSCO leadership from 7-9 June 2021. The retreat brought together participants to create a common understanding and narrative of the UN transition process in the DRC, including on key principles, priorities and mechanisms to guide the overall transition planning process. This retreat was followed by a technical level **Transition Workshop** from 10-18 June 2021 to help MONUSCO and UNCT staff operationalize this vision into a Transition Plan.

The retreat and workshop represented one of the first times that a broad group of UN stakeholders were convened to set out a joint roadmap for the DRC transition process. Based on these efforts, a Transition Plan was developed by the Integrated Transition Team (ITT) on the ground. To maintain momentum, the Project, in close cooperation with the Integrated Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC, the DRC IOT and supported by the Transition Specialists, is accompanying the ITT with the development of an **implementation strategy**.





This strategy will focus, among other things, on identifying integrated mechanisms for delivery, short to medium term transition planning milestones, and joint monitoring and reporting modalities.

The **Transition Specialist (TS)**, deployed in the Integrated Office, has been instrumental to strengthen the understanding and capacities of MONUSCO and UNCT staff on transition planning. In addition to supporting senior leadership develop various planning documents, the TS has **fostered integrated transition planning** through the establishment of the ITT. The TS has also supported the work of the Kasai Integrated Transition Task Force and the Tanganyika Provincial Integrated Transition Team and forged linkages and information exchange between these three mechanisms for a more joint-up approach. The TS has also conducted studies and facilitated several learning events for these teams to raise awareness of key principles and best practices of transition planning. Among these is a **lessons learned studies on the transition planning process in the Kasais**. The findings of this study were presented and discussed during the Transition Retreat and Workshop.

In an effort to accompany senior leadership involved in transition planning, the Project has organized a **transition leadership exchange** in January 2021 between the DRC and the outgoing DSRSG in Sudan. The exchange provided an informal platform for leadership to share their personal experiences and discuss common transition challenges and opportunities in their respective settings.

“ **Transitions can only be successful if they involve a whole-of-the-system approach and are planned with full national ownership. The Transition Visioning and Planning Retreat that the Project facilitated helped us articulate a common vision and approach. Moreover, it lay the groundwork for the development of the Transition Plan and our consultations with national stakeholders. The Transitions Project’s continued support will be instrumental to seize the momentum generated to mobilize the collective efforts of the UN system and its partners in support of the people and Government of the DRC.** ”

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General **Ms. Bintou Keita**

The Transition Specialist's role in the DRC

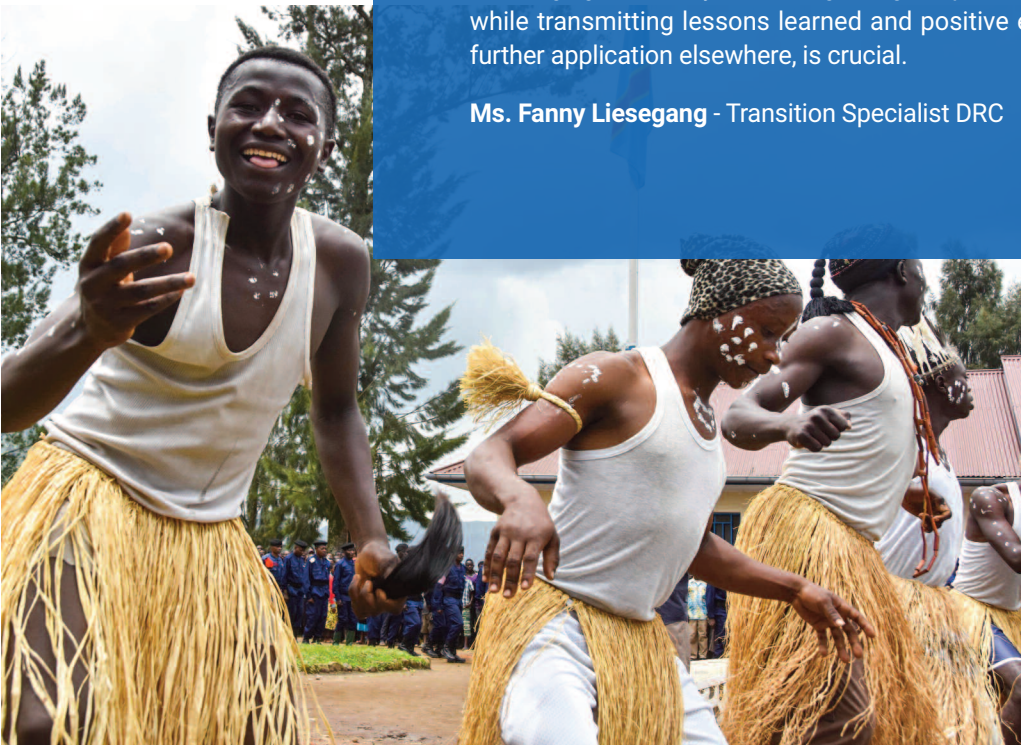
The role of a Transition Specialist is multi-layered and demanding in any setting. A successful Transition Specialist must have in-depth knowledge of the country's critical stabilization and peacebuilding priorities, the peacekeeping mission's and agencies' mandates, expertise in strategic planning as well as integration, and the ability to create a network of trust and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Among the main tasks of this work in the DRC is to build bridges between MONUSCO and the UN Country Team. This entails identifying mandate linkages and uncovering collaboration opportunities in priority areas to achieve common goals. To make this happen, a Transition Specialist serves as both a subject matter expert as well as a translator between the various UN entities that need to work together to ensure transitions are successful.

The best part of the Transition Specialist's job is its versatility. Assignments and the tools to accomplish the job vary widely and range from ensuring strategic alignment, developing vision papers and strategies, support to planning in specific thematic domains, and much more. The work is multidimensional and encompasses national, provincial and regional aspects and different thematic areas (protection of civilians, rule of law, human rights, stabilization, etc.). The spectrum of stakeholders to interact with is equally diverse: it includes Mission and UNCT staff dealing with planning, political affairs, and different thematic areas, the diplomatic community, government representatives, civil society, and think-tanks.

Lastly, an important element of the job is to make sure that global policies and knowledge are translated to serve the local context. Knowledge and information exchange go both ways. Ensuring that good practices are applied in the host country, while transmitting lessons learned and positive examples back to the Project for further application elsewhere, is crucial.

Ms. Fanny Liesegang - Transition Specialist DRC



A stylized map of Guinea-Bissau in a light yellow color, showing the main island and several smaller islands to the west. The map is positioned behind the title 'Guinea-Bissau' and the 'Transition process overview' section.

Guinea-Bissau

Transition process overview

In December 2020, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) closed after 11 years. With the mission withdrawal, the UN transitioned to a UN Country Team only presence.

Building upon the Transition Workshop in 2019, UNIOGBIS and the UNCT developed a Transition Calendar that outlines several transition milestones. These include a comprehensive capacity mapping of the UNCT and national and international stakeholders to identify critical gaps resulting from UNIOGBIS' withdrawal, as well as the development of a resource mobilization strategy to address the identified gaps. The transition process in Guinea-Bissau was one of the first times an agreement among the mission and UNCT was made to fully align transition planning to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). This has the advantage of ensuring that the transition process is forward-looking and provides an opportunity for the mission to leave a lasting impact beyond the mission lifespan. Moreover, it is a way to better align priorities between the UN and Government and enhances UNCT ownership. Indeed, following UNIOGBIS' departure, the jointly agreed-upon transition peacebuilding priorities are at present informing the outcomes of the new 2022-2026 UNSDCF.

Project support

To support the achievement of the transition milestones post-mission, the Project continued to support the **Transition Specialist** position in the RCO. The Transition Specialist has supported the UN's engagement with national and international stakeholders, has facilitated planning coherence and supported the development of the UN resource mobilization strategy that explores financing options to scale up UNCT's capacities in key peacebuilding areas. The Project has also provided funding to undertake the **comprehensive capacity mapping**, which was finalized by the RCO in March 2021. The Project has furthermore provided **short-term expertise to guide UNDP's reprogramming process**. This support centered around the development of a UNDP-specific transition strategy to absorb the relevant peacebuilding priorities into its ongoing portfolio.

“ The transition process in Guinea-Bissau was one of the first times an agreement among the mission and UNCT was made to fully align transition planning to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). This has the advantage of ensuring that the transition process is forward-looking and provides an opportunity for the mission to leave a lasting impact beyond the mission lifespan.

Sudan

Transition process overview

Following the termination of UNAMID's mandate by the Security Council on 31 December 2020, the mission completed its drawdown and entered its liquidation phase on 30 June 2021. Meanwhile, the recently established UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) operates with a nationwide mandate and in an integrated manner with the UNCT in implementing joint peacebuilding priorities. The closure of UNAMID and the concurrent establishment of UNITAMS, set against the context of a profound national transition process, constitutes one of the most complex reconfigurations the UN has ever undertaken.

Project support

The Project was closely involved in the start-up planning process for UNITAMS. Given the complexity that a transition from a Peacekeeping Mission to a Special Political Mission entails, the Project focused on making sure **that linkages between the UNITAMS start-up planning, the UNAMID drawdown and the UNCT reprogramming efforts were established**. This involved advocacy and awareness raising efforts and frequent consultations between the different planning teams established. In addition, the Project developed **practical guidance notes** and papers around key aspects of the planning process:

- 1 Lessons from previous peacekeeping to special political mission transitions.
- 2 Host government engagement.
- 3 Lessons on integrated planning.

The dual transition process in Sudan requires the UN to significantly adjust its programming and working methods to support the country to deliver on its national commitments and reforms. To assist this process, the Project and DCO carried out a **UNCT Capacity Mapping** in October 2020, to identify existing gaps and capacity needs to scale up the UN's interventions. It also informed ways to enhance integration and coordination between the mission and UNCT.

To **enhance organizational learning**, the Project has collected lessons on different aspects of the UNAMID drawdown. Together with the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the UN Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), and UNAMID, it has analysed ways to sustain Rule of Law and Human Rights support in Darfur. This study focused on the State Liaison Functions (SLF), a joint delivery mechanism that the Project has helped conceptualize.

In addition, the Project has studied the closure modalities of the SLFs and the transfer of knowledge as well as sensitive records, documents, and data from UNAMID to UNITAMS and the UNCT. The Project has also undertaken a research initiative in collaboration with DPO's Child Protection team to collect lessons on the preservation of Child Protection functions in the UN transition in Sudan to document challenges and develop operational guidance on the transfer of knowledge and sensitive records for upcoming UN transitions.

“ In my role as Deputy Joint Special Representative, I was responsible for leading the planning and implementation of one of the most complex UN transitions ever i.e. of UNAMID, the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur. The fact that Sudan was and continues to be in transition, the size and range of UN activities in Sudan, the geographical separation of the UNAMID and UNCT leadership, and the UNAMID and Government decision makers in the country contributed to making the UN transition one of the most challenging the Organization has had to undertake. The UN Transition Project was an invaluable resource to me throughout the journey: they provided on-the-ground and remote support on a wide range of key transition issues at key junctures in the process. With their help, we successfully reconfigured the UN's assistance to Darfur, including by expanding the presence of the UN Country Team in Darfur and strengthening its programmatic capacities throughout the country.

- Deputy Joint Special Representative Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho



From Policy to Practice: Improving Transition Policies and Guidance

As the global policy level on transitions is evolving, in particular with the 2019 Secretary-General's (SG) Planning Directive on UN Transitions and the review of the Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy (IAP), the Project focuses on providing practical guidance and support to the field to implement these policies. In turn, being anchored in the policy, learning and partnership divisions of the four project entities, the Project is also well positioned to act as a thought-leader that can feed lessons learned and best practices from the field into policy formulation processes at a global level. An important forum for the Project to engage UNHQ decision-makers around these lessons is the UN Executive Committee and Deputies Committee (EC-DC).

UN transitions are a recurring agenda item on the EC-DC meetings. These meetings offer a platform to engage senior leadership on transitions and enhance their role to push this agenda forward. Together with the EOSG, the Project often leads the implementation of its decisions. This includes, for example, the monitoring and implementation of the Transition Calendars, one of the main provisions in the SG's Directive. Currently, the Project and the EOSG are undertaking a review for the EC-DC to assess the impact and value of the Transition Calendars and how this can be improved.

UN Integrated Transition Calendars

In April 2019, the Secretary-General launched his Planning Directive for the “development of consistent and coherent UN transition processes”. The Directive makes a number of requests regarding early planning and financing, operational support and staffing. A key component of this Directive is the request to jointly develop Transition Calendars. These calendars can be seen as roadmaps outlining key transition milestones and objectives that enable the entire UN country presence to identify peacebuilding priorities, with a focus on gender and Human Rights, capacities and gaps around these priorities, and resource mobilization strategies to better prepare for mission withdrawal and UN reconfiguration. The calendars are therefore an important tool to nudge missions and UNCTs to incorporate a transition lens into existing planning processes, even before the Security Council requests an exit strategy. This is particularly important in complex settings with large multidimensional peace operations where the Security Council has asked for conditions to be tracked that would allow for mission drawdown and withdrawal.



Enhancing UN integration in transition settings and beyond

There is a positive correlation between the level of UN integration and the seamlessness of a UN transition. Enhancing UN integration can therefore be seen as early transition planning. It is against this background that the Project has closely supported the 2020 UN Integration Review. This Review, which will, inter alia, inform the revision of the Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy (IAP), provides a unique opportunity for the Project to mainstream transition planning principles into system-wide planning and assessment processes.

In particular, the Project has been the driving force behind the inclusion of a behavioural insights lens into the Review. To this end, it has hired behavioural insights experts from Ideas42 to identify behavioural barriers to integration and articulating recommendations on how to address them. The Project is now continuing its partnership with Ideas42 to pilot the implementation of these findings in the field.



Transition Financing Guidance

The ‘financial cliff’ represents a major risk for the host country’s pathway to sustainable development. Mission withdrawal often coincides with shrinking and less predictable aid flows. Particularly challenging is that already insufficient programmatic funding for peacebuilding activities reduces even further. This is compounded by the fact that a mission’s presence often provides a considerable injection of economic activity into national economies. Their withdrawal, in turn, increases the economic challenges the host country is facing. In a climate of scarce resources, missions, UNCTs and national authorities need to be supported to elaborate longer-term financing strategies, including by tapping into innovative transition financing modalities that will allow these actors to deliver effectively together, and strengthen partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the private sector. To encourage this, the UN Transitions Project, in collaboration with PBSO, has led the development of Transition Financing Guidance. This guidance provides an overview of financing and resource mobilization approaches to sustain peacebuilding engagement post-mission. An innovative aspect of this guidance is that it focuses on how host governments can better access funding and how the UN can support national financing strategies. The guidelines are currently being finalized and will likely be piloted in the field in 2022.

A key priority of the Project is to gather and disseminate lessons and good practices from previous and ongoing transition processes to inform future ones. To this end, the Project has conducted the following studies throughout this last year:

- The UN Transitions Project working paper *“Foreign Direct Investment and Growth in Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries”* (2020), which provides concrete data on how peacekeeping missions contribute to faster post-conflict economic recovery.
- The DCAF-UN Lessons Learned report on *“UN/AU Transition in Darfur: Lessons from Assistance on Rule of Law and Human Rights through the State Liaison Functions”* (2020), extracting lessons and recommendation from this integrated mandate implementation modality in Sudan.
- The report *“Lessons Learned from UNAMID for Preserving the Child Protection Function in UN Missions Transitions”*, in collaboration with DPO’s Child Protection Team.
- The UN-internal guidance note on *“The Child Protection Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in UN Mission Transitions”*, in collaboration with DPO’s Child Protection Team.
- The briefing note *“Testing global guidance for the transfer of child protection knowledge, data and capacities in mission transitions”*, in collaboration with DPO’s Child Protection Team.
- The UN-internal guidance note *“Child Protection in Mission Transitions: Guidance for Preserving and Transferring Knowledge, Data and Capacities”* in collaboration with DPO’s Child Protection Team.
- An After Action Review on the *“Closure of State Liaison Functions (SLFs) and Residual Programmatic Activities, and the Transfer of Knowledge from UNAMID to UNITAMS and the UNCT”*, conducted in collaboration with UNAMID, UNITAMS and Agencies Funds and Programmes in Sudan.

Once completed, the Project uses the dissemination of its knowledge products as an opportunity to enhance cross-pillar cooperation by facilitating exchanges among practitioners across Missions, UNCTs and UNHQ Desk Officers, policy-makers and external stakeholders. While the Covid-19 pandemic has made the organisation of these exchanges more challenging, the Project has adapted to new online methods to disseminate its publications in a more engaging and interactive way.

For example, in the context of UNDP’s 2021 Development Dialogues forum, the Project has organised a virtual High-Level event: *“Beyond UN Transitions: Sustaining Peacebuilding and Rule of Law”* in collaboration with UNDP’s Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights Team. The event brought together practitioners from the field, UNHQ, Member States and research institutes. During the forum interactive tools such as real-time polling and surveys were used to facilitate participation among the audience.

The Project has also organized multiple events that focused on the impact and sustainability of the State Liaison Functions in Sudan. The Project brought together mission and UNCT staff from the DRC, Haiti, Mali and South Sudan to discuss how the relevance and applicability of this model in other transition settings.

Similar to its dissemination events, the Project’s trainings and workshop help bring people together to create a common understanding and vision of key transition milestones and objectives. In addition to the Project’s training initiative in the DRC, the Project has facilitated transition sessions during trainings for Senior DDR Advisors and OHCHR Human Rights Advisors.



Once completed, the Project uses the dissemination of its knowledge products as an opportunity to enhance cross-pillar cooperation by facilitating exchanges among practitioners across Missions, UNCTs and UNHQ Desk Officers, policy-makers and external stakeholders. While the Covid-19 pandemic has made the organisation of these exchanges more challenging, the Project has adapted to new online methods to disseminate its publications in a more engaging and interactive way.

Sustaining peace requires ongoing partnerships

between the UN, Member States, regional actors, IFIs, CSOs and other stakeholders. This is especially true during UN transition processes. While partners, such as regional organizations and IFIs, are oftentimes better placed to sustain political engagement around key peacebuilding issues or can provide financial support in these areas after mission withdrawal, the UN brings these partners to the table too late. As a result, strategies and priorities to support residual peace and security issues post-mission may not be aligned.

The UN Transitions Project therefore focuses on identifying ways to increase engagement and coordination with these actors. To this end, it has initiated a research project with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) to analyze past and potential future roles of African regional organizations in UN transition processes, including in supporting residual peace and security issues. A key focus will be to explore how the UN and regional organizations can better collaborate in these settings to support host nations sustain peace and development gains during and after UN mission withdrawal.



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Complementing this, the Project has increased its efforts to foster dialogue around UN Transitions among UN Member States and non-UN stakeholders. The Project has, for example, supported Tunisia with the organization of a Security Council Open Working Group Debate on “Transitions and exit strategies in peacekeeping operations – taking stock and looking forward” in December 2020. During the meeting, Member States and UN leadership exchanged views on how to enhance transition processes, including by addressing: (1) How national ownership of transition processes can be further incentivized; (2) How to ensure continuity of engagement on political initiatives and other priority issues; (3) How to enhance collaboration with regional organizations and IFIs; and (4) What are entry-points for strategic collaboration with the Security Council around the Transition Calendars.

In addition, the Project has contributed to various external fora and events including the “IPI virtual policy forum: A new era for UN peace operations transitions” (2021), a series of Sudan-focused UN–Member State discussions throughout 2020, and informal briefings to Member States of the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34).

As a result of the Project’s increased advocacy and awareness raising efforts, Member States are demonstrating more interest in the topic of UN transitions and are more proactively engaging with the Project and the UN on how to make them more successful.

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Partnership with the European Union



In the context of the “UN-EU strategic partnership for peace operations and crisis management”, the UN Transitions Project established a joint initiative with the EU on transitions. The aim of this partnership is to explore how the UN and EU can better collaborate in transition settings, including through the development of joint strategies to address peace priorities beyond mission withdrawal. As part of this exercise, the Project and its EU

focal points organized consultations to bring EU-UN technical experts together around various thematic areas that are considered priorities in transition settings, including SSR, Rule of Law, stabilization and peacebuilding. The initiative was endorsed by the 27th UN-EU Steering Committee on Peace Operations and Crisis Management and has since generated increasing interest among both organizations.

Building on this momentum, a joint stock-taking exercise is currently being conducted in Mali and the DRC to examine enabling factors and key challenges to EU-UN collaboration around transition processes. The findings of this exercise will be presented and validated in joint workshop, planned for December 2021. Building on the stocktaking exercise, the EU and UN are aiming to articulate a joint transition roadmap, identifying thematic areas, tools and mechanisms, as well as entry-points for closer collaboration in ongoing and future transition processes.

“ EU Member States have called on the EU to give particular attention to “ensuring synergies and enhancing complementarity between UN and EU missions and operations and other relevant UN and EU instruments to improve impact on the ground, emphasizing that coordination is particularly important in transition contexts”.

- Council of the European Union, 12 July 2021

While the international community can provide critical support, only national stakeholders can build durable peace. For transition processes, this implies that more emphasis needs to be put on preparing national stakeholders for success in the post-mission phase.

The Project works with leadership and technical staff to help them align transition planning more closely to national development plans and strategies, as was done in Guinea-Bissau. The Project also advocates for engagement with national stakeholders to happen at an earlier stage and to go beyond mere consultations towards outlining strategies that strengthen their capacity in areas that will be transferred when the mission withdraws. While it is the responsibility of the SRSG and senior leadership to engage host governments, the Project organizes trainings and lessons learned exchanges to help UN actors identify practical ways to do so. For example, the Project dedicated a significant part of the DRC Visioning Retreat and Transition Workshop to provide good practices on national engagement from previous transitions in Timor-Leste and Liberia. The Transition Specialist deployed also played a key role in facilitating and supporting the engagement with host governments, CSOs and other national stakeholders in transition planning.

While Covid-19 has impacted the UN's ability to engage national stakeholders, critical efforts are currently underway to ensure that transition plans and strategies are developed with full national ownership, as evidenced in the recently submitted DRC Transition Plan, under the leadership of the SRSG. Beyond continuous advocacy and guidance, the Project aims to scale up its direct engagement with host governments during the second project year.





During mission drawdown there is a need to better safeguard and enhance gains made on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and gender equality. To this end, the Project and its deployed advisors work with missions and UNCTs to integrate the gender conflict analysis findings throughout transition planning. For example, in the DRC, the Transition Specialist supported the UN Women-led gender conflict analysis. The findings of this analysis were presented and discussed during the Visioning Retreat and Transition Workshop and were subsequently integrated in the DRC Transition Plan. However, given that Missions often provide dedicated gender expertise, it is equally important to identify and address potential gender capacity gaps resulting from mission withdraw early on. The Project contributes to these efforts by advocating for a gender lens to be included throughout all stages of transition planning. Where needed, it can also provide dedicated gender expertise to mission and UNCT members to help with gender analysis or identify and develop joint programming opportunities. In Guinea-Bissau, the Project is providing programmatic funding to UNDP to build upon and leverage support provided by UNIOGBIS on gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular by supporting the role of women's networks and CSOs in the implementation of the country's Common Agenda for Peace and Development.

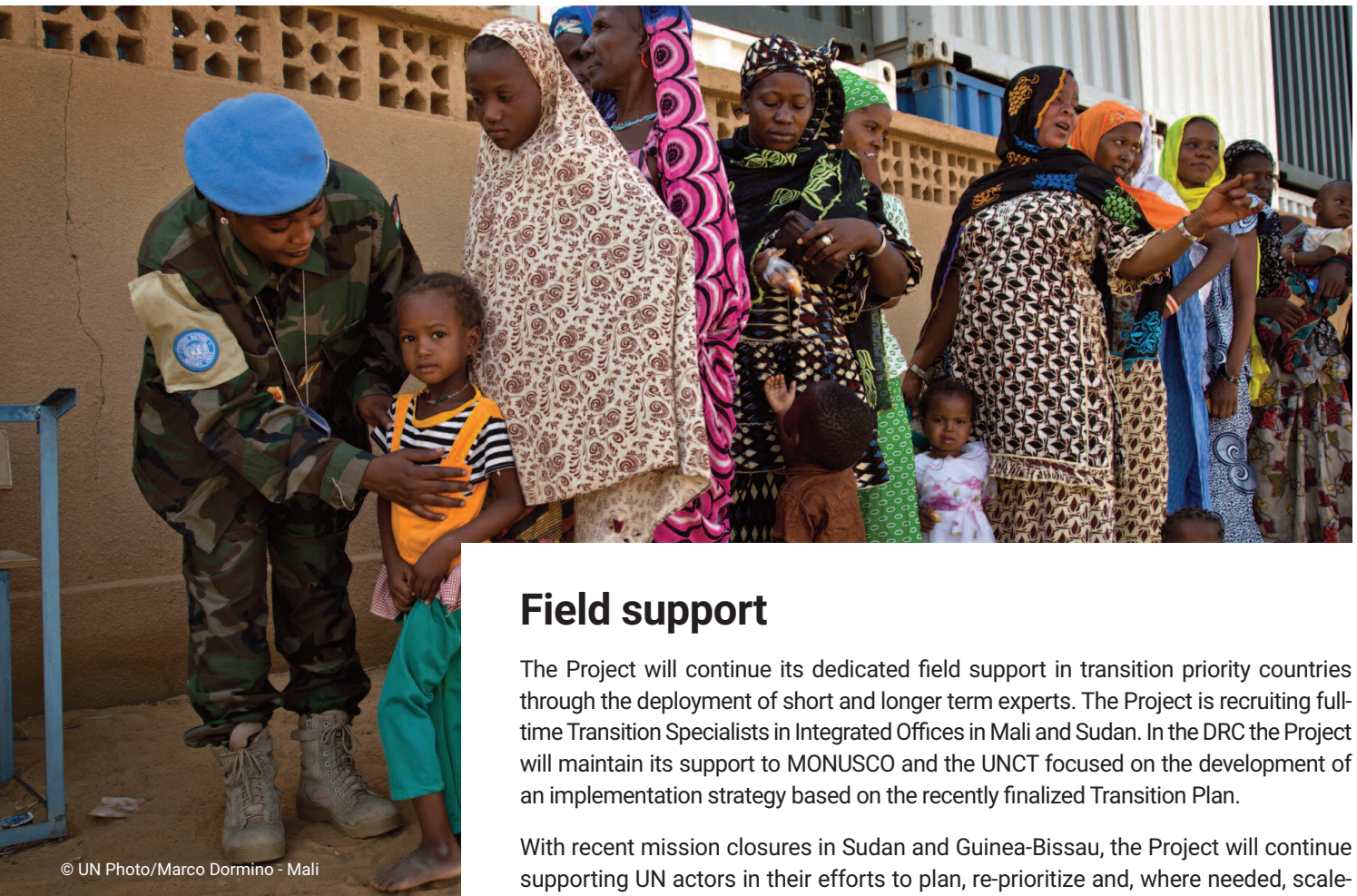
Throughout the year, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted ongoing transition-processes in the field as well as the implementation of Project activities due to travel restrictions. The inevitable impact of Covid-19 on UN transitions and broader political transitions in host countries has had a negative effect. The pandemic is profoundly affecting peace and security across continents and is threatening not only hard-won peace gains but also potential relapses into conflict. In transition priority countries, the pandemic has posed challenges to the national ownership and engagement around transition planning, since national authorities and UN senior leadership had to focus efforts and attention on containing the spread of the pandemic. Maintaining the necessary political momentum around UN transitions has therefore also proven to be challenging, and bilateral aid flows to these countries may also be redirected to Covid-19 response.

These challenges notwithstanding, the Project was able to adjust its priorities and working modalities to continue actively supporting UN Transitions and UN Staff involved in ongoing planning processes. It has done so by scaling up delivery of remote technical support and sharing of lessons and guidance through virtual engagement. While virtual meeting modalities do limit the ability to interact, the Project has been able to reach more UN staff and other stakeholders than before.



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With Covid-19 restrictions slowly being eased, and with the Project having received additional funding support, 2021-22 presents a crucial year for the Project to advance its work. Demand for transition planning support at UNHQ and in the field remains high and windows of opportunity have emerged to further embed proactive and integrated transition planning in the DNA of the organization. Responding to these needs and opportunities, the Project aims to strengthen its partnerships, provide thought leadership and continue its country support in the following priority areas:



Field support

The Project will continue its dedicated field support in transition priority countries through the deployment of short and longer term experts. The Project is recruiting full-time Transition Specialists in Integrated Offices in Mali and Sudan. In the DRC the Project will maintain its support to MONUSCO and the UNCT focused on the development of an implementation strategy based on the recently finalized Transition Plan.

With recent mission closures in Sudan and Guinea-Bissau, the Project will continue supporting UN actors in their efforts to plan, re-prioritize and, where needed, scale-up their programming in critical peacebuilding areas. For example, in Sudan the Project will deploy a staff member to temporarily support the UNITAMS Peacebuilding Office. The Project is also exploring options to provide expertise to work on protection issues.

Beyond its current priority countries, the Project is scaling up its engagement with missions that have shown interest to initiate early transition planning. In 2021/2022 the Project will support these countries to develop and/or roll-out the Transition Calendar. The Project has already begun by providing remote technical guidance and accompaniment but, upon request, can also deliver surge support to these and other countries.

Guidance and learning

Addressing organizational knowledge gaps on transitions issues remains a key objective of the Project. To this end, the Project will (a) initiate lessons learned studies on previous transitions (e.g. Haiti and Guinea-Bissau), (b) develop guidance products on ways to address recurrent transition challenges (e.g. host government and regional organization engagement and preserving protection and gender gains in transitions), and (c) organize learning and practice building opportunities to ensure the uptake and use of these knowledge products among a diverse range of stakeholders. An overview of the anticipated studies and guidance products can be found below:

- Study on “The role of regional entities in transition settings”.
- Practice note on national ownership in transitions.
- Guidance on protection issues in transition settings.
- Study on “UN Energy Transitions: renewable energies in support of sustaining peace”
- Transition Financing Guidance
- Review of existing guidance on the transfer of mission assets and other operational issues.

Policy development and implementation

The Project will continue contributing to the implementation of the findings of the UN Integration Review, focusing on piloting behavioral insight strategies. In collaboration with the EOSG, the Project will also analyze how the Integrated Transition Calendars can be made more useful for early transition planning and will further support the implementation of the SG’s Planning Directive on UN Transitions.

Following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2594 (2021) on UN Transitions, the Project will engage and assist lead entities across the UN system to follow-up on the various Council taskings and reporting requirements stipulated in the Resolution.



Collaboration with regional organizations

As part of its ongoing EU-UN partnership, the Project will organize a joint workshop to identify entry-points for closer EU-UN collaboration in transition settings.

Based on the ongoing joint research study with the KAIPTC on the role of regional entities in UN transitions, the project intends to organize a validation workshop with UN, ECOWAS and AU representatives to validate its findings and discuss action points.

National ownership and engagement

The Project aims to scale up its engagement and support to host governments and national stakeholders to enhance national ownership in transitions. While Covid-19 has constrained engagement with these critical partners, the Project is planning several initiatives in 2021 and 2022, including organizing briefings and exchanges, initiating studies to understand national perspectives on UN transitions and, when possible, the Project intends to pilot the deployment of national Transition Specialists with host governments.

