



Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) undertook the India Country Review (CR) in consultation with the Government of India (GOI) and the UNDP Country Office. This is the first in a series of CRs to be conducted under the Assessment of Development Results (ADR) concept. This concept is expected to provide UNDP's senior management, host countries and other stakeholders an evaluation of the development effectiveness of UNDP's interventions in a given country. The objective of the India Country Review is to provide an independent assessment of the first Country Cooperative Framework (CCF-I) for India (1997-2002). This review assesses outcomes, indicates the lessons that can be learnt from the experience of CCF-I, makes recommendations in the light of these lessons and finally suggests a range of options for the upcoming country programme. The review is based on the initial desk research done in the Evaluation Office, information gathered from the team's field visits, discussions with key actors and stakeholders, review of evaluation reports and the three consultants' reports.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Indian economy has performed impressively over the past two decades. During the 1980s, India's average rate of economic growth was the highest amongst large countries outside East Asia. A major fiscal and balance of payment crisis led to a package of radical economic reforms in 1991, although some steps towards liberalisation had been initiated in the 1980s. The reform measures included a greater private sector role in India's development by

improving the investment and tax regimes, dismantling industrial licensing, opening infrastructure to private investment, reforming public enterprises and the financial sector, and reducing price controls. The package also initiated the liberalisation of foreign trade and exchange regimes.

The Indian economy responded well to these measures and during the financial years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97, the economy grew at 7.2%, 7.5% and 8.2%, respectively, becoming one of the ten fastest growing economies in the world. Given this background, a growth target of 6.5% was set for the Ninth Plan (1997-2002). The actual performance for the years 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00 and 2000-01 has been 4.8%, 6.6% (provisional), 6.4%(quick) and 6.0% (advance estimates) respectively. India's GDP per capita in 1999 (PPP) was US \$ 2248.0.

Despite the priority accorded to poverty alleviation in India's Five Year Plans, its magnitude remained high until the late 1970s (51.3% in 1977-78). However, since the early 1980s, with the high economic growth the proportion of people below the poverty line has been declining. According to a survey conducted for the period July 1999 to June 2000 there was a significant decline in poverty to 26% based on a 30-day recall methodology. Significant gains have also been recorded in the sphere of human development as is evident from the data relating to life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy, higher education, availability of safe drinking water, agricultural productivity, food reserves, total fertility rate, and decentralisation. Despite improvements in its human development indicators, the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) ranks India 115th out of 162 countries and places it in the group of countries with Medium Human Development, with an HDI of 0.571 in 2001 moving up from 0.439 in 1992.

India today is the world's largest democracy with a vibrant electorate, active Judiciary and civil society groups, and a fiercely independent media. Despite its many noteworthy achievements, the country faces several challenges. Economic growth is decelerating, the incidence of unemployment on current daily basis is high, there is widespread undernourishment, the infant mortality rate has been stagnating, electricity is not available to 60% of rural and 20% of urban households, the environment

has been deteriorating and gender inequality persists. A key problem faced by the Indian economy is the high fiscal deficit at both the central and state levels.

In order to address these problems, the Government has been trying to accelerate the process of economic reforms. The Approach Paper to the Tenth Plan takes the current weaknesses into account and suggests a reform instead of merely a resource plan. The Plan has an indicative target of 8% GDP growth. The Approach Paper also takes a more comprehensive view of human development. Some important areas of focus of the Tenth Plan are employment creation, institutional reform to facilitate a greater private sector role in industrial and infrastructure development, greater emphasis by the Government on social sector development, overhaul of the existing healthcare system, increase in gross domestic savings and investment ratio, fiscal health, civil service reform, improved capacity and funding for major institutions of decentralisation, and measures to ensure equitable gains from globalisation.

TRANSITION FROM COUNTRY PROGRAMME IV

Important shifts in the strategy of Country Programme IV (CP IV) were made in order to encourage national capacity building and sustainability. CP IV included a change from a project approach to a programme approach, a focus on long-term capacity building and institution building at the community level rather than purely technical inputs, greater involvement of national expertise instead of reliance on international consultants, a shift to national execution and ownership by the GOI, and stronger partnerships with Non Governmental Organisation (NGOs).

DETERMINANTS AND STRATEGY CCF-I

CCF-I – a collaborative endeavour between the GOI and the UNDP – focused on growth with equity, with poverty alleviation and human development as its central concerns. The objectives and contents of CCF-I were influenced by some important policy announcements, including the emerging priorities of the Ninth Five Year Plan, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments and India's commitments in global conferences. The framework was finalised at a

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time when the Indian economy was witnessing strong growth. The national policies sought to consolidate economic gains and achieve a 7% growth rate, which was considered essential for poverty eradication and promotion of human development.

THEMATIC AREAS OF CCF-I

For CCF-I, “ten inter-related and mutually reinforcing” programmes were developed under four broad thematic areas as follows:

I. Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods

(i) Small Industry Development Programme

(ii) Food Security Programme

II. Access to Basic Services

(iii) Primary Education Programme

(iv) Health Support Programme

III. Management of Development

(v) Economic Reforms Programme

(vi) Capacity Building Programme

(vii) Community-Based Pro-Poor Initiatives

(viii) Technology Programme

IV. Sustainable Development

(ix) Capacity building in environmental management

(x) Energy and Environment Programme

Crosscutting themes such as gender equality, employment, environment, technology management, population, HIV/AIDS, and development were to be appropriately addressed in all programmes.

The total resources estimated for CCF-I, along with the carry over resources of the previous cycle were US \$ 125.7 million. This includes an outlay of Rs 88.40 million for CCF-I.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND PROGRAMME RELEVANCE

The themes and programmes constituting CCF-I are closely aligned with India's national priorities. This harmony, however, needs to be viewed in the context of the multiple objectives of UNDP programmes and the comprehensive nature of India's Plans. The stronger the link between the CCF-I programme and a national policy/goal, the greater the probability of programme outcome serving as an input to the policy discourse.

Since CCF-I was initiated, a number of changes have taken place in India's socio-economic scenario. Economic growth has slowed down and the fiscal deficit has become

worrisome. The GOI proposes to address these problems through a number of remedial measures and a package of second generation economic reforms. However, the long-term human development concerns like poverty, gender disparities, inter-state disparities, unemployment, inadequate access to basic minimum services and their poor quality for the underprivileged, deteriorating environment, burgeoning slum population, and gender inequality persist. With the Government's emphasis on economic reforms, control of fiscal deficit and stepping up the pace of social development, the programmes included in CCF-I continue to be relevant in the context of long-term priorities.

COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT (CCA) AND THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK (UNDAF)

The CCA carried out in 1999 by the UN system in India is a well-researched, collaborative exercise, designed to draw attention to India's many achievements and the challenges it faces. UNDAF was designed to “increase the effectiveness and efficiency of UN operations by bringing about a greater synergy in action.” It is based on rigorous analysis and a dialogue with the Government and other development partners in India to sharpen the focus of the UN system's endeavours. This process of analysis and dialogue led to the identification of gender equality and decentralisation as two critical areas of importance to India's future development. Both these UNDAF themes are closely linked to CCF-I programmes, and will therefore strengthen the implementation process of CCF-I.

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

The CCF-I comprises four principal themes, ten programmes and 93 sub-programmes. It took a considerable amount of time finalising the sub-programme documents, and the last lot was signed only in 2000. The National Execution (NEX) guidelines were also issued in July 1998, over a year after CCF-I began. Due to procedural problems there were delays in the release of funds. The Country Review (CR) team faced difficulty in assessing the outcomes as many sub-programmes are in the early stages of implementation and it is premature to expect visible outcomes. The

programme is designed to pilot holistic strategies and participatory approaches for food security and poverty alleviation at the national, community and household levels, focusing specially on the role of women. The team was able to review a few sub-programmes in some detail. An overview of the CR team's assessment is given below:

Food Security Programme

This comprises five sub-programmes three of which relate to women's empowerment and one each to rice and maize production. According to the available information, women's groups and NGOs in Andhra Pradesh are campaigning to support the registration of land ownership in the name of men and women jointly. Under the maize sub-programme, higher yields have been recorded.

The Food Security Programme has two distinct streams – one seeks to facilitate women's access to resources, and as yet, it is early to assess its impacts; the other focuses on spreading technology at the grassroot level. The UNDP however needs to consider whether given the variety of programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and state governments, it can add substantial value in this area.

Leather Development Programme

This programme aims at assisting artisans in the leather sector. Its primary focus is on poverty alleviation, sustained livelihood, and building linkages between the organised and the unorganised sector. The programmes have resulted in higher incomes, higher wages, and availability of work throughout the year. The actual composition of beneficiaries suggests that the poorest in the industry (the job workers) have not been directly targeted. Except for the Athani project (Karnataka), and in a small measure in the Mojari Project, the sub-programmes have not specifically targeted interventions among women. Technology, design and marketing interventions have been helpful. The experience with foreign consultants/experts has been mixed. Self-sustenance of the programme is likely only in centres that are actively engaged in selling designs, lasts, patterns, CFC machine usage time, and consultancy. NGOs have generally achieved better results than government departments.

The programme offers quality service that is highly subsidised. Most state governments may not be able to bear the financial burden of

running these successful interventions. Therefore, exit strategies will require exploring ways of making the interventions financially sustainable. It appears that both artisans and industry are developing a dependency syndrome. The implementing agencies' direct interface with the leather workers' community appears to be causing apprehension to the local panchayat leaders, creating potential tension between them and the disadvantaged community of leather workers. However, despite its deficiencies and problems, the review team found the programme to be successful, with the beneficial impacts of its interventions being clearly visible. The evaluation report notes that "the new business model propagated through National Leather Development Programme had worked very well and could hold the key for transforming the Indian Leather Industry...".

Fibres and Handicrafts

This programme proposes to demonstrate sustainable livelihood approaches through integrated interventions in sectors such as jute, non-mulberry silk, cane and bamboo, and carpets. The sub-programmes focus on niche sectors, which are generally neglected in mainstream efforts, and they target the disadvantaged artisan groups (predominantly women) with traditional skills living in underdeveloped regions. These sub-programmes are hence sound in design. They hold out the promise of poverty alleviation through technological and skill upgradation and marketing support in a sustainable manner. The cane and bamboo and the non-mulberry silk sub-programmes are well conceived and are showing encouraging results. The Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC) has done noteworthy work and has been received well in the North Eastern states. The sub-programme intervention has shown encouraging results and with the launching of the National Bamboo Mission, can also be said to have influenced policy. The jute programme is focused more on small entrepreneurs, and one needs to examine whether it has achieved its objectives.

Small Scale Industry

The basic thrust of this sub-programme is on strengthening the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and developing three rural, non-farm sectors, mainly beekeeping, clay pottery and handmade paper. The sub-programme

was initiated recently and disbursement has been low. The line ministry has pointed out that there is a time lag in understanding and internalising the concept and modalities of the sub-programme, including UNDP terminologies, systems and project procedures. The sub-programme has considerable potential in the future, provided the capacity of KVIC can be strengthened and the sector made market oriented and commercially viable.

Concentrated in four southern states, the coir sub-programme has been quite successful. Nearly 80% of coir workers are women. The available information indicates that satisfactory progress has been made in the areas of capacity building, community mobilisation, and introduction of innovations.

Community Based Primary Education

This programme aims to demonstrate models of effective community participation in school management and protection of children's rights. Better known as the Janshala Programme, in this intervention UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, and ILO have come together with nine state governments and two GOI departments to support the ongoing efforts in the country towards the universalisation of primary education in India. With active involvement of the community, enrolment of children has increased and the dropout rate has declined. The schools have become a place of attraction for children and with the introduction of innovative concepts, learning has become a joyous experience. Teachers' attendance has also become regular.

Health Support Programme

This programme seeks to pilot effective models of public-private-community partnerships for improved healthcare for the poor. At US \$4.5 million, the outlay of this programme is relatively modest. With a utilisation of US \$0.69 million till December 2001, it is premature to assess the impact of this programme.

Both the education and health programmes, while worthwhile in themselves, are relatively small interventions compared to much larger programmes being implemented through other sources. In both sectors the UNDP can make a limited impact in terms of its direct intervention. It needs to be examined whether its pilot interventions on a limited scale will

be able to make a distinctive contribution to new thinking in these sectors.

Economic Reforms Programme

This programme essentially envisages a number of action-research studies in a variety of areas relating to economic reforms. The issues range from pricing of municipal services to preparing operational strategies for financing and improving access to health. Funds available under the programme will also be utilised for capacity building of officers involved in the privatisation programme. The programme has yet to show concrete results, although the utility of the proposed studies and training is unquestionable. In pursuing these activities in the future, UNDP needs to carve out its own niche, avoid any possible overlap and keep in view its own strengths and constraints vis-à-vis other, bigger players in the field.

Capacity Building Programme

This programme supports a core activity of the decentralisation theme, with the potential to sensitise key grassroot players to gender concerns. Under the sub-programme, six regional resource centres are being developed. These will assist in the capacity building of 3.4 million elected representatives of local self-government institutions, of which one third are women. Full ownership by the concerned ministry and the six regional resource centres, and putting effective implementation arrangements in place are crucial to the success of this sub-programme.

This sub-programme also includes strengthening administrative training institutes at the state level and developing a Centre for Public Policy at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. Other interventions relate to urban governance and citizen's access to information.

The capacity building programmes, if implemented well, can make a significant contribution to developing the effectiveness of elected representatives at the local level. This is crucial to strengthening decentralisation and improving governance.

Community Based Pro-Poor Initiatives

This programme seeks to support people-oriented development planning, social mobilisation and community participation, particularly among women, tribals and backward communities.

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The Community Based Pro-Poor Initiatives (CBPPI) programme has 17 sub-programmes, of which 12 are being implemented through NGOs.

Overall, the sub-programmes are well designed and take into account the needs, strengths and limitations of local communities. Special efforts are being made to mobilise women. Self-help groups are being promoted. For poverty alleviation in tribal communities, an attempt is being made to revive the traditional knowledge system.

The sub-programmes have demonstrated many new and innovative approaches. They have made several impressive achievements. The available evidence suggests that the interventions have been accompanied by intense managerial and technical inputs, a great deal of commitment, and external supervision for relatively small operations. It may not, therefore, be easy to replicate the sub-programmes. Given the fact that there are other, bigger players in the arena of poverty alleviation, a better strategy may be to widely share the experiences of UNDP-supported programmes so as to influence the perspectives and approaches of these other players, who, with their substantially larger funds, can be expected to exercise greater influence in ensuring replication and mainstreaming of the successful approaches demonstrated. Some beginnings have been made in CCF-I. For instance, under the District Poverty Initiative Programme, the World Bank has adopted the model of the UNDP South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) and has provided an additional resource support of about US \$2 million for each district.

Technology Management Programme

According to information furnished by UNDP-India, two technology development and application centres with ten rural technology resource centres under them have been established. In addition, four centres for providing vocational training in need-based technical skills to rural and semi-urban youth have been set up. If they are successful, the initiatives could spread technology at the grassroots. The UNDP's involvement has also focused on the linkages between technology and poverty alleviation. However, it is not clear what value has been added by the UNDP since its partner is the Department of Science and Technology, which has the requisite resources and access to national and international experts.

State Human Development Project/Human Development Resource Centre

This project seeks to support Planning Commission and state government efforts in the formulation of state-level human development reports so as to promote human development oriented policies at the state level. The UNDP's annual Human Development Reports (HDRs) are its flagship product and over the years they have emerged as the principal advocacy platform for sustainable human development. They have demonstrated that income alone does not capture all dimensions of development and have made a significant contribution to promoting human development oriented policies world-wide. The Planning Commission's recently published India HDR and its additional resource support for sub-national HDRs can be seen as a signal achievement of UNDP advocacy. Although the outlay for this project is only US \$0.5 million, it can be expected to make a significant difference in ensuring higher priority to issues of human development in public policies and development plans, particularly in the states. The State Human Development Reports (SHDR) for Sikkim and Rajasthan have already been published, and HDRs for five more states are being finalised.

HDRs need to be followed up by studies in priority areas, evaluation studies of specific programme interventions, etc. In the future, more downstream work is needed by offering strong support to states. This programme has considerable potential, particularly in terms of advocacy, as it addresses key UNDP concerns of gender and decentralisation, and strengthens partnerships to fight poverty across the country.

The achievements of SHDR/HDRC interventions are encouraging, but their potential to make a significant impact on India's development endeavour is even greater. Given its capacity to impact public discourse and policies in favour of the poor as well as issues requiring special focus in the context of globalisation, this programme merits added emphasis in the future.

Environment Programme

This programme's principal objectives are to facilitate natural resource management, strengthen the existing capacity for public policy, and disseminate information/knowledge

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on environmental management/conservation. Its main advantage is its linkage and access to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Montreal Protocol (MP) resources where UNDP plays a major role. The rationale to pursue sustainable development initiatives is unexceptionable. However, a large number of scattered sub-programmes are not amenable to proper monitoring and evaluation. Hence, it is advisable to focus on a few key sub-programmes.

Disaster Mitigation and Management

In the wake of the Orissa super-cyclone and the Gujarat earthquake, the UNDP country office has demonstrated its ability to address emergent needs. Under the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) convened by UNDP, a coordinated UN system support to the Government has been put in place. Its objective is to promote enhanced community participation and preparedness for disaster mitigation and management. The Country Office is involved with 19 projects involving an amount of about US \$10 million. The UNDP pursued a strategy focusing on vulnerability reduction and sustainable recovery in the post-emergency relief phase. With this entry point it also pursued pro-poor initiatives, empowerment of women, village and district level planning, and skill and capacity building.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Programme Formulation

The process of programme formulation is elaborate. While programmes/sub-programmes are well designed and comprehensive, their preparation and approval tends to get delayed. It took three years to get all the programmes cleared under the CCF-I. There is a need to review the two-tier programming approach afresh.

Resource Flow

The flow of resources to sub-programmes and their utilisation has been slow (45.22% up to December 2001). Delays in release of funds suggest procedural or simply processing delays.

National Execution (NEX) Guidelines

The NEX guidelines were finalised in July 1998. They strengthen responsibility and ownership

within the Government and facilitate linkages and coordination. On the whole, the NEX guidelines of July 1998 are a welcome reform. However, due to a variety of reasons, they have not been conducive to prompt release of funds. The CR team noted numerous instances of procedural delays that adversely affected programme performance. There is need for the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), National Programme Directors (NPDs), and the UNDP to further discuss this issue, and resolve practical impediments to fund release.

Management Structures

Programme Management Boards (PMBs) headed by secretaries to the GOI should continue, but look at only macro policy and coordination issues rather than at administrative approvals and financial sanctions. The Programme Standing Committees headed by NPDs must be empowered, with the necessary administrative and financial functions delegated to them. The programme design may be modified to meet the requirements of both the Expenditure Finance Committees (EFC) and Standing Finance Committees (SFC), so that clearance of the EFC/SFC is not required afresh.

State Level Steering Committees

State Level Steering Committees should be set up under Chief Secretaries of states to facilitate higher level attention, ownership, dissemination of lessons, best practices, replication, state level coordination and interaction with civil society partners. Programme Management Units (PMUs) may be approved where the size and nature of the programme justify them. The PMU may be carved out of ministry staff and paid at Government scales. In exceptional situations, when an official brings to bear upon the programme some special expertise that is distinct from his/her normal managerial functions, emoluments at higher scales could be considered.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) should be encouraged to actively participate in UNDP programmes. Alternatively, they should be taken in confidence and a collaborative relationship between NGOs and PRIs should be established. Similarly, the district administration should be taken on board.

A corps of community animators/volunteers

should be developed. They can then disseminate the programme 'message', do extension work, motivate the beneficiaries, liaise with programme managers, promote self-help groups and help carry on the work when the programme managers are no longer there.

UN System Coordination

The concrete steps taken to bring about greater coordination and synergy among UN agencies include the CCA exercise completed in 1999, followed by the finalisation of the UNDAF document, the full harmonisation of programme cycles among UN system organisations by 2003, learning about ongoing efforts to bring about cost savings through Inter Agency Working Groups (IAWG), joint learning and training for UN staff, development of a common intranet etc. As UN organisations proceed with the harmonisation process, and UNDAF priorities get reflected in the new Country Programmes (CP), new opportunities for collaboration will emerge and will need to be seized. Five UN organisations participated in the Joint UN system Education Programme (Janshala) and the UN system adopted a coordinated approach to support the disaster affected states of Orissa and Gujarat.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preserving UNDP's Image

UNDP's consistent support to people-centred development processes, and its effective advocacy of the concept of sustainable human development through the global HDRs, has established for it an image of impartiality and neutrality which should be preserved in order to protect its unique position. This will require a keener understanding of each country's strengths, constraints and sensitivities. The India Country Office has so far sensitively calibrated UNDP's global agenda to suit the local circumstances. This effort needs to be strengthened and encouraged in the future. The GOI also needs to appreciate that while the UNDP's financial inputs may be modest, it has other unique strengths which should be taken advantage of.

Avoiding Multiplicity of Objectives, Programmes and Sub-Programmes

Multiplicity of objectives and a large number of programmes and sub-programmes diffuse

focus, strain managerial resources, render monitoring and evaluation difficult, and lead to sub-optimal utilisation of resources. There is, therefore, a need to ensure that sub-programmes converge both thematically, focusing on a few clearly identifiable themes and objectives, as well as geographically.

Partnerships for Synergy and Long-Term Sustainability

In order to bring about synergies in collaborative efforts and long-term sustainability of programmes, partnerships and alliances need to be built at several levels. Special attention needs to be given to building partnerships with the state governments, district administrations and PRIs, which will ultimately carry forward the programme.

Approaching Development Holistically

A uni-dimensional intervention will not ensure results in the long-term and thus it is essential to take a holistic approach. While the entry point may be a key priority or a felt need, other related elements will have to be addressed incrementally. The impact of a programme can be maximised and its sustainability ensured when a more holistic approach to development is adopted.

Inter-Sectoral Linkages Among Programmes

A greater emphasis must be laid on building inter-sectoral linkages in developing conceptual frameworks, design, and management to maximise impact. Often programmes and sub-programmes are designed independently and function more or less in isolation from each other, despite cordial interpersonal relationships. Hence, intersectoral linkages need to be consciously built up to improve the quality of design and implementation and to enhance impact.

Active Involvement of Zila Parishads, Blocks and Panchayats (PRIs)

PRIs are now consciously mandated and a large number of development programmes are to be planned and implemented by them. In this context, a conscious and vigorous initiative in the upcoming CP to ensure active participation of PRIs in appropriate

programmes is essential. Where the implementing agencies are NGOs, efforts will be needed to promote a collaborative relationship with PRIs.

Maximising Impact through 'Indirect' Interventions

The UNDP's efforts will be better rewarded if it focuses on indirect interventions like demonstration programmes to validate innovative approaches, sharing lessons learnt and their dissemination, human development initiatives like the HDR, capacity building etc. However, in order to lend credibility to its indirect interventions, the UNDP will need to continue with some direct interventions for hands-on experience. Advocacy by itself, without a demonstration of the ability to implement, will have only a limited impact.

Exit and Replication Strategies

Exit strategies should be specifically built in at the time of programme design. These strategies should be adequately explained to the stakeholders. Milestones for each stage of the project need to be specified in the programme/sub-programme document so that the stakeholders know at which stage external assistance will no longer be available. At present, most programmes or sub-programmes do not seem to incorporate, or in practice implement, such exit strategies. There are many instances of beneficiaries developing a dependency syndrome. At the state government level, there is an impression that UNDP intervention is another source of additional resources or it is treated as such. The precise objective of the intervention needs to be explained upfront to the stakeholders at the ground level.

Disseminating Lessons

The global HDR has been a vehicle for disseminating development lessons from India. More systematic and intensive action is needed to bring international experience to India, share experiences and best practices within India, develop best practices documentation and take follow up action to widely communicate its messages. Some of this is underway and should be expanded.

Gender Mainstreaming

At present, despite a rights-based approach to gender equality in programme and sub-

programme documents, the focus on gender is still strongest in community-based programmes implemented through NGOs. Progress in the field often seems to depend on the perspectives and skills of the implementing NGOs. In some programmes, there is a risk of interventions reinforcing traditional gender inequalities and biases. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks need to be consciously gendered. The Country Office has taken several steps to strengthen integration of gender into CCF-I programmes, including capacity-building for programme teams and partners, and participatory exercises for gender impact assessment. These efforts need to be strengthened in the lead-up to the next CP. Representatives of women's groups and gender experts should be consulted in programme formulation, as was done in a few programmes under CCF-I. The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) should be actively involved. The UNDP should contribute to the process of gender perspective building for NGOs. Men need to be fully involved in pursuing programmes for ensuring gender equality at the community level. The UNDP should also undertake some focused action-research projects to explore the linkages between macroeconomic policy and women's lives. The work on gender budget analysis initiated in partnership with the DWCD is an important initiative in this direction.

NGOs-PRIs Interface

In the larger Indian scenario, the relationship between NGOs and PRIs is not always positive. Greater attention must be given to ensure that UNDP interventions contribute to strengthening the links between NGOs and Panchayats, which, as the constitutionally mandated institutions of local governance, will play a critical role in sustaining and taking forward the interventions.

Encouraging Transparency among PRIs and NGOs

Transparency among PRIs and NGOs, which can contribute to enhancing their credibility and effectiveness, can be ensured by disseminating information on their financial transactions, accounts, and audit reports. UNDP-India should consider encouraging NGOs and PRIs to do so.

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Refining Programme Design and Implementation Strategies

This should be done by undertaking a rigorous analysis of the aspects of class, gender and replicability. Without such an analysis and inclusion of appropriate measures in the programme design, the poorest and the most vulnerable may be neglected, men may sabotage the process of women's empowerment, and replication may not happen. The programme design should also incorporate rights-based perspectives. The precise nature of the programme, whether a 'direct intervention,' a 'complimentary effort' or a 'pilot project' should be made explicit in their designs at the very outset.

Rethinking Strategies during Implementation

The programme design should cater for mid-course evaluation and corrections.

Dealing with Vested Interests

NGOs should be encouraged to be proactive and to find solutions when problems arise in consultation with local administration, take preventive measures against threats from vested interests, establish networks with like-minded organisation, and take the district administration into confidence. At the same time, the need for NGOs to adhere to rules and procedures, and demonstrate transparency in their own functioning cannot be ignored.

Developing Effective NGOs as Resource Centers

The UNDP and the Government need to promote more effective networking among NGOs with proven expertise, field presence and competence in addressing critical issues. Focused efforts are also needed to develop these NGOs as resource centres and 'mother NGOs'.

Developing a Cadre of Paraprofessionals/Community Animators/Volunteers

The experience of some CCF-I sub-programmes shows that literacy is not a necessary precondition for training paraprofessionals like livestock and health assistants. It is essential

to develop paraprofessionals so that they can offer services locally to the community without depending on bureaucratic structures.

Time Perspective for Social Mobilisation

The fact the social mobilisation is a complex process and requires time should be kept in view while designing programmes and working out the time schedule for their implementation.

Future Directions

Programmes for the ensuing CP should be developed around the objectives of India's Tenth Five Year Plan, the overarching goals of UN system in India, and UNDAF themes. The CR team proposes the following set of possible options for the upcoming CP:

1. Strengthening decentralisation
2. Accelerated development of 20-30 backward districts on pilot basis
3. Human development
4. Technology for poverty reduction
5. Vulnerability reduction at community level, including disaster risk reduction
6. Civil services renewal
7. Renewable energy
8. Water conservation and harvesting
9. Information Technology for development
10. Partnering the private sector

Crosscutting themes like gender equality, sustainable human development, HIV/AIDS, and environmental sustainability should be appropriately incorporated. Communications and advocacy strategies should be strongly built into all programmes as a means of sharing best practice and ensuring replicability.

The above ten alternatives are being suggested as a set of options to enable the UNDP and the GOI along with their partners to examine the relevance, pros and cons and costs and benefits of each. The CR team would like to reiterate emphatically that the UNDP needs to sharpen its focus and choose only five or six of the most appropriate programmes. Only a concentrated effort can lead to a distinctive contribution and value addition. The temptation to undertake a large number of scattered programmes, all very worthwhile in themselves, may lead to dissipation of resources.