

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

UNDP has had a long relationship with Jamaica, having established a country office (CO) there in 1965. For nearly forty years, it has supported Jamaica as a trusted partner in its development process. During the past seven years, the period under review by the Assessment of Development Results (ADR), two country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) have been approved for Jamaica: the first covers the years 1997-2001, and the second covers 2002-2006. In 2002, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Jamaica also prepared an overall strategic framework in the form of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the timeframe up until 2006, in order to secure coherence and coordination among individual programmes of the various UN organizations and agencies.

The ADR for Jamaica is significant for a number of reasons. First, Jamaica has a human development index (HDI) placing it in the medium human development category, comparable with most countries in the Caribbean region; yet it is faced with issues of human deprivation and inequality and very high rates of crime and violence in its society. Second, this evaluation is strategic in that Jamaica is the first country in the Latin America and Caribbean Region to undergo an ADR. Thus, useful lessons for the region are expected from the evaluation, particularly in regards to the positioning of a small CO in the context of a changing environment with limited financial and human resources. Third, the timing is opportune in that the evaluation is expected to help UNDP to think strategically and prepare in advance for the formulation of the next UNDAF and Country Programme Document, the harmonized cycle of which begins in 2007.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Jamaica is located in the western Caribbean and has a population of approximately 2.6 million people. It is the third largest island in the region, with a land area of 10,990 square kilometres and is endowed with a natural beauty as well as natural resources such as bauxite and other minerals. Jamaica's population is largely urban, with approximately one third of the total population living in the capital

city, Kingston, and approximately one third living in the three other major urban centres. Since its independence in 1962, Jamaica has functioned as a Constitutional Monarchy and Westminster-style parliamentary democracy. National legislative authority is vested in a bi-cameral Parliament comprising a House of Representatives and a Senate. The existing political system has functioned with a reasonable degree of stability, although political partisanship has led to periodic eruptions of violence-particularly in the period leading up to elections. Jamaica has high levels of crime and violence that have negative implications for tourism and investment.

The country plays an active role in various regional bodies. It is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and, together with other Caribbean countries, is involved in three simultaneous trade negotiations: the African, Caribbean, Pacific-European Union (ACP-EU) Convention, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in which they are seeking to defend the interests of the small economies of the region. Jamaica is a beneficiary under the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which is a programme of economic assistance from the United States to Caribbean countries, and under the Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement (CARIBCAN). The government has sought to intensify patterns of economic integration within the Caribbean region, which is expected to lead to the establishment of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) by 2005.

Jamaica operates a free market economy, with a large number of private sector businesses operating alongside a reduced number of state-owned enterprises. Beginning in 1980, successive governments have introduced economic reforms geared toward fostering private-sector activity and increasing the role of the market in the economy. Recent macroeconomic performance has been affected by the 1995/1996 financial crisis that resulted in a significant increase in domestic debt incurred by the government. Real gross domestic product (GDP) declined from 1996 to 1999, but was followed by three years of growth. Jamaica also

recorded its sixth consecutive year of single-digit inflation in 2002, which however increased to double digit inflation in FY 2003/2004.

The structural adjustment policies pursued by the Government of Jamaica during the 1980s and early 1990s that, among other things, involved a significant reduction in government expenditure in the social sector, resulted in a noticeable decrease in the living standards of the people. In 1991, the government liberalized the foreign exchange market as a part of a major drive to liberalize the economy as a whole in the context of commitments to the major international financial institutions. One immediate consequence was a rapid devaluation of the Jamaican dollar and a rate of inflation that surpassed 80 percent for the year 1991. Poverty levels rose dramatically because of the sharp decline in real wages, forcing the issue onto the government's agenda of policy priorities. Four years later, poverty eradication became the centrepiece of the government's social policy. Despite negative or moderate economic growth in recent years, reduction in the level of poverty in society has been making some progress.

Jamaica attained near universal primary enrolment by the early 1980s, well ahead of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of achieving this goal by 2015. By 2001, it had reached 96.2 percent. But while net primary enrolment is very high, the system suffers from the low quality of education and a low completion rate (68 percent)-especially for boys enrolled in secondary education.

Jamaicans have been migrating for decades to the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. In fact, emigration has reduced the rate of natural increase of Jamaica's population by approximately 45 percent for more than four decades. The United States is the main destination country for Jamaican emigrants, but data reflect a declining trend since the 1990s in emigration to the United States and Canada.

A key challenge for Jamaica is employment creation. The employment rate declined in the 1970s, recovered slightly in the 1980s, but has trended downwards since the 1990s (in part due to the closure

of the garment and other manufacturing businesses and lay-offs in all economic sectors). High unemployment rates occur among youth and women.

The country's average life expectancy is 76 years, which compares favourably with other neighbouring countries, while the infant mortality rate in 2003 is estimated at 17 deaths per 1,000 live births. Although healthcare was traditionally provided free of cost by the state, user fees have now been introduced. HIV/AIDS is reported to be the leading cause of death in the 15 to 44 year age group in the Caribbean. Jamaica has the third-largest population living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, after Haiti and the Dominican Republic. UNAIDS estimates that as of the end of 2003, an estimated 1.2 percent of Jamaican adults (15 to 49 years) or 21,000 persons were living with HIV/AIDS, of whom 10,000 were women¹. The rate of HIV infection is increasing steadily in women and at a higher rate than men for the past few years.

Efforts have been made in securing women's rights and in the expansion of economic opportunities for women. However, serious concerns remain regarding the access by women to positions of power and decision making. The translation of high academic achievements in girls into comparable opportunities for economic empowerment remains a challenge, as does addressing the high levels of violence against women and girls, who are also major victims of domestic violence and rape. The marginalization of young males, particularly in terms of their participation in higher education has become an additional concern in recent years.

MAIN FINDINGS

UNDP Jamaica has contributed to national development results in a number of significant ways in the areas of improved governance, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, and environmental sustainability and energy.

Improved governance

In the area of governance, UNDP Jamaica has focused on four strategic areas of support, namely: building public dialogue on sustainable human

development (SHD) and human rights; managing globalization; promoting social cohesion; and strengthening the public sector. In addition, UNDP responded to the government's request for support of electoral reforms in 2002.

Public dialogue on sustainable human development and human rights

UNDP Jamaica has supported increased public debate on SHD and human rights through public awareness initiatives and policy dialogue on these issues. In 2000, it supported the preparation of Jamaica's first Human Development Report (HDR). While the document may have influenced policy makers, it is unclear how much it contributed to a broader public debate on SHD issues. In 2001 UNDP contributed to the human rights debate through convening a round table on human development and human rights, bringing together policy makers in government, representatives of the business and non-governmental organization (NGO) communities, and members of the legal community.

Managing globalization

In 2001, UNDP, together with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), sponsored a study on the impact of globalization and liberalization and engaged senior public, private, and not-for-profit sector officials and policy makers in round-table discussions of these issues. This led to the idea of undertaking a more comprehensive study of globalization. Jamaica has started work on the second national HDR (NHDR), which is planned to be published in early 2005. Its focus is globalization and its impact on the economy and society.

Promoting social cohesion

A significant contribution was made by UNDP Jamaica to the Local Government Reform programme, which was aimed at organizing grassroots-level mechanisms to develop people's initiative and secure their participation in national development activities. In 1997, through its support to the Parish Infrastructure Development Programme (PIDP), an approach termed "community engineering" by the management of

¹Source: UNAIDS, 2004 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic

PIDP was prepared based on information provided by UNDP on best practices in local government. The pilot projects funded by UNDP as part of the PIDP were assessed as being "successful", since they established community structures to interface with the relevant agencies involved in project implementation and initiated and developed mechanisms for project identification, preparation and implementation in other communities throughout Jamaica. UNDP's support to the Local Initiative Facility for the Urban Environment (LIFE) has also helped community participation, establishment of partnerships and resource mobilization for local-level initiatives.

The recently launched Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance Initiative is another major attempt by UNDP Jamaica to foster social harmony and cohesion, and it has generated a great deal of interest. It is too early at this stage to assess results, and the commitment of the government counterpart agency to this process, as expressed to the ADR team, is unclear.

Strengthening the public sector

In this area, the focus of UNDP's support was on strengthening the capacities of the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) to carry out its responsibility as the national regulatory body for utility service providers in the area of water supply. The main outcome of UNDP's work has been an increase in efficiency of the OUR and the capacity of its staff, as indicated by the demand for them to train staff of similar organizations in the region. Support for the information technology (IT) platform has led to improved capacity to deliver information to the public, as required by the newly promulgated Access to Information Act. Without UNDP's advisory services, there would not have been a draft law on water, which is an important piece of legislation that will address the sector's needs in the context of the new policy of competition.

Electoral reform

The United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and UNDP Jamaica responded to the government's request for support to the electoral

reform process. DPA fielded a three person investigative team, whilst UNDP provided specialized technical expertise in electoral management and supervision. The Electoral Advisory Committee enlisted UNDP's involvement to provide a "seal of approval" of the electoral arrangements, rather than to directly manage the electoral process. UNDP also contributed to the strengthening of the Office of the Political Ombudsman (PO) through, inter alia, the provision of a legal expert. This enabled the PO to effectively monitor the elections and to speedily resolve problems that arose during the course of the elections.

Poverty reduction

Even before the start of CCF-I in 1997, UNDP Jamaica played a major role in helping the government pay attention to and conceptualize poverty through the development of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP). It is currently engaged in small interventions such as supporting access to productive resources and assets, and access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) through CISCO and the Jamaican Sustainable Development Network Programme (JSDNP). The outcomes from these initiatives have yet to be assessed.

Responding to HIV/AIDS

UNDP is also engaged with other UN agencies and organizations in formulating comprehensive strategies to prevent the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS. UNDP Jamaica supported capacity building to address priority issues related to the pandemic through a Leadership for Results Training Programme. This has helped generate regional networks and alliances, thereby facilitating further regional collaboration. UNDP also played an important role in helping the government secure funding from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS to help implement the National Strategic Plan through its participation in and support to technical working groups.

Environmental sustainability and energy

UNDP interventions helped Jamaica articulate national policies and clarify the roles of institutions

for environmental sustainability. Most important was UNDP's contribution to strengthening institutions and building capacities. Plans and programmes for sub-sectors such as national forestry management, bio-diversity protection, ocean and coastal zone management, early warning system and disaster management have been drawn up and necessary legislation has been passed. The challenge the government faces now is to enforce compliance with the legislation and ensure the effective implementation of programmes and strategies through adequate financial and human resources.

LESSONS LEARNED AND KEY CHALLENGES

The Jamaica ADR points to a number of lessons learned and key challenges:

- **Country Programme Focus**-When resources are small, focusing the country programme on a small number of key national priorities with visible results becomes even more important.
- **National Ownership**-No matter how important an idea is or seems to be, and no matter how obvious solutions are, in order to build trust between the people and the government, it is necessary to respond to the government's priority needs.
- **Relevance**-The relationship with the government may weaken, especially if resources are limited. UNDP becomes less relevant to the government and society at large if the UNDP's contributions to results are not clear.
- **Flexibility**-UNDP needs to be flexible to react quickly to changing circumstances, for example, in the face of the changing aid relationship and changing nature of the aid regime.
- **Sustainability**-Without an appropriate exit strategy and planning for sustainability, worthwhile interventions become irrelevant.
- **Targeting**-Well-targeted interventions, even with a modest amount of resources, can produce important results as demonstrated by UNDP Jamaica's support to disaster preparedness and management.

A number of key challenges face UNDP Jamaica. While its contributions to development results in a number of key areas have been significant, its partnership with the government has eroded over time. This is due in part to limited resources and in part to differences between the government's and UNDP Jamaica's response to national development priorities. Recently, the CO's resource mobilization strategies and focus on its comparative advantage have not had the desired results. The UNDP CO has been handicapped by a number of internal management problems. It has been affected by the absence of a long-term Deputy Resident Representative (DRR) even though its multi-country representation continues. Further, 70% turnover of its national staff, due to the re-profiling process, affected the smooth functioning of the CO.

The absence of a critical mass of staff in the CO appears to be a weakness of considerable importance. The CO has also suffered from some programme management and design weaknesses that need to be urgently addressed. For example, developing links between upstream (macro) policies and downstream (micro) initiatives has not received sufficient attention, nor have links between the three thematic areas, namely governance, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability been adequately explored. Results orientation is weak in UNDP's programming process in Jamaica. Systematic monitoring and evaluation have been limited, and as a result, the process of lesson learning has suffered. Limited resources underscore the crucial importance of the sustainability of development interventions and the need for an exit strategy.

In the context of limited resources at the disposal of UN agencies and organizations, visibility for the work of the UN System as a whole and support for the achievement of the MDGs should receive higher priority by the UN System. This can be enhanced through greater collaboration and joint programming among the UNCT members, preferably making the UNDAF process more effective and meaningful. UNDP and the UN System have not publicized sufficiently well the knowledge networks, banks and databases that are available.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions from the assessment and key recommendations are presented for consideration in the development of the next Country Programme Document and, more importantly, in supporting the formulation of a UNDAF for the new programme cycle beginning in 2007.

The Jamaican economy faces critical challenges in the future. Stimulating investment and growth and overcoming fiscal constraints are the most serious of these challenges. Controlling crime and violence, reducing income poverty, improving the quality of education, tackling child and maternal mortality, combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, employment creation and incorporating the vast informal sector into the formal economy, and managing the debt overhang, are other complex challenges. The country is also vulnerable to natural disasters that cause human suffering and entail significant costs. Globalization provides opportunities but also makes the country vulnerable to external shocks. With regard to the MDGs, Jamaica has achieved the goal of universal primary education (although there are a number of outstanding issues regarding quality of education) and is on track to achieve the goals for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. However, it has to make more progress if it is to reach the goals for gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal mortality rates, and an end to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The assessment of UNDP's strategic positioning in Jamaica suggests that there are a number of opportunities for the CO to exploit further. These should be examined in cooperation with national and international development partners (IDPs) in the context of developing the Medium Term Planning Framework, which is now happening.

UNDP's flagship programme is its involvement in the national Civic Dialogue process, an activity directly executed by the CO. It is a programme with great potential, but it runs the risk of not meeting its objectives unless follow-up activities are carefully planned. Where the Dialogue should lead, what activities it should generate, and how it should be

managed in the future, are vital questions that need to be addressed. In this respect, an intensive dialogue with the government (as well as with other IDPs) should be expeditiously undertaken. This is particularly important in view of the fact that the government counterpart agency is still not fully convinced about the benefits to be derived from the dialogue process.

UNDP should also continue to emphasize support to poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, the environment, and natural disaster management initiatives. Opportunities for capacity building, international contacts, and resource mobilization should be more vigorously pursued in these areas. Public-sector modernization and implementation of decentralization programmes constitute additional areas in which technical cooperation could play an important role. How UNDP can support these programmes through exploiting knowledge banks in order to identify innovative approaches and to address priority issues should be explored further.

On the issues of globalization and regional integration, for Jamaica to participate effectively in both the global and regional economy, it will need to improve its competitiveness while also protecting vulnerable sectors of the economy. For example, Jamaica should exploit opportunities provided by developed countries through the outsourcing of production. Production integration on a regional basis is an area of strategic importance and could benefit from further support provided through UNDP Regional Programmes. Macroeconomic management is another major challenge facing Jamaica and, within the broad policy framework laid down by the government, UNDP should identify those issues that could be addressed through technical cooperation.

The country programme should strengthen its focus on a number of key issues while remaining flexible enough to respond to priority government needs. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. A strong thematic focus should be established within the framework of the UNDAF.

The CO needs to become more results oriented. This should apply not only to the CO staff but also

to all project and programme partners in the government and civil society. Efforts need to be made to upgrade the knowledge of all staff in results-based management. Skills already exist, but they are not being fully used, in part due to the pressure of work. Effective monitoring and evaluation should not be treated as an additional task but as an integral part of the work of the CO.

The economic problems faced by the government are serious and will require the adoption of creative and clearly formulated strategies if these difficulties are to be resolved satisfactorily. In this regard, there is consensus that the updating of the Medium Term Planning Framework could prove effective in attracting increased donor support. UNDP, together with other international development organizations, play an important role in assisting the government in its formulation.

Given the constraints imposed by limited human and financial resources, the UNDP CO, with the assistance of the appropriate headquarters units, should seek to articulate a viable strategy for resource mobilization. This is critical for ensuring that UNDP is able to function at an optimum level of effectiveness. At the same time, consideration should be given to sharpening the emphasis on coordination and strategic interventions.

The strategic positioning of UNDP is very much linked to the existence of a relationship of trust between UNDP and the government. The relationship between the Jamaican Government and the UNDP CO was ruptured in the late 1990s. Although the situation has improved, strengthening the relationship, particularly in a period of resource scarcity, is a priority. The ADR team notes that there are multiple challenges for UNDP and draws attention to a careful consideration of the profile of the CO leadership that requires a range of skills, including high intellectual capacity, diplomatic skills, and personnel management skills.

Corporately UNDP should examine the nature of its engagement with developing countries on the basis of their stage of development and the character of that development. It should develop a new strategy delineating the nature of its

engagement in different categories of countries such as the least developed, low-income, lower middle-income, and upper middle-income countries² whose needs for technical cooperation may vary. The special features of economies as reflected in classifications such as land-locked countries or Small Island Developing States should also be taken into consideration in developing this new strategy. Some of the thematic foci that dominate UNDP programmes may be important for low-income countries, but their relevance to other categories of countries may be less evident. A number of government officials commented on the change that has occurred in the relationship between the IDPs and the government in recent years. In this context, the question that needs to be posed is the following: What is the role of UNDP and the UN System in a middle-income country? How does UNDP respond to a situation where the burden of debt and the lack of resources, especially financial resources, constrain the capacity to overcome significant development challenges?

The strategy in middle-income countries should be designed with the objective of equipping them to achieve higher levels of human development. Promoting human development aimed at easing the process of integration in the global economy is an area where UNDP should become even more proactive. Its global analysis of human development and its store of knowledge on human development strategies should be utilized more fully by middle-income countries. Based on its impartiality and its position of trust, UNDP should provide increased opportunities for a country to choose from a range of choices drawn from its global experience. The team underlines the importance for COs to access knowledge resources and experiences gleaned from UNDP's global activities and, in particular, good practices.

UNDP Jamaica must be part of a far more unified presence. It is in countries such as Jamaica where

²There are 32 land-locked and 46 small-island developing countries and 50 least-developed countries as categorized by UN; 16 land-locked countries and 11 small-island developing states are included among the least developed category. Low-income countries according to Bank-Fund categorization have per capita income of less than \$735 as of 2002. Lower middle-income countries have per capita income as high as \$2,935 and upper middle-income countries have per capita income as high as \$9,076.

implementation of the Secretary General's reform agenda should be treated not as an option (or something to implement slowly) but as the core of the UN's strategy to support the national development effort. The continuing tendency to operate independently should give way to joint action and improved collaboration among the

UNCT members under the leadership of the resident coordinator (RC) within the framework of the UNDAF. Indeed, a concerted effort should be made to ensure acceptance of the UNDAF as the common programming framework for the various organizations and agencies of the UN System and to ensure that it is made fully operational.