

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an independent evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) contribution to socio-economic and human development in Jordan over the course of two programme cycles during 1998–2007. This Assessment of Development Results (ADR) focuses on the strategic positioning of UNDP within the policy environment in Jordan, and assesses whether the UNDP Country Office (CO) has been able to make critical and tangible contributions to development results in the country. A key goal of the evaluation was to examine whether UNDP CO initiatives and interventions were aligned with medium- and long-term needs and priorities of the country as a whole. Such priorities include Jordan's ongoing efforts to promote economic liberalization and political reform and the longer-term process of preparing the country and its people to assume a competitive place as a knowledge economy in the global environment.

This ADR focuses on three main objectives:

1. To examine the relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, sustainability and effect of the strategic interventions of UNDP in terms of addressing the most pressing issues of poverty, governance, environmental protection, gender inequalities and human rights in Jordan.
2. To assess the developmental effectiveness of the 1998–2002 UNDP Jordan Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) and the 2003–2007 Country Programme Outline (CPO).
3. To draw lessons that could inform policies and identify programme and policy areas where the activities of UNDP could be enhanced in order to sustain a relevant contribution to Jordan's long-term development. An important aspect of this evaluation is UNDP Jordan's dual role as catalyst and facilitator of development, closely linked to the resources

and expertise UNDP is able to leverage in providing added value and quality services, and identifying opportunities as they arise.

MAIN FINDINGS

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP IN JORDAN

Thematic areas addressed in UNDP Jordan's country programmes remained consistent in both the 1998–2002 CCF and the 2003–2007 CPO cycles. These focused on the three main national priorities: governance, poverty reduction, and environmental protection and conservation.

Highlights of the 1998–2002 CCF demonstrate UNDP Jordan's alignment with such priorities:

- **Governance:** Special emphasis was placed on capacity-building in the public sector and capacity-building for the management of Jordan's integration into the world economy;
- **Poverty reduction:** Special emphasis was placed on social productivity in job-related skills training and expanding the government's social safety net;
- **Environmental protection:** Support was provided to the government, including the efforts of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other environmental projects in implementing the government's National Environment Action Plan. Because of the significant amount of resources required, UNDP left major inter-ventions to other donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). UNDP played a supporting role in national efforts to address water shortage and management issues by helping to create the central water database, and by focusing on capacity building and institutional strengthening of government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and

- **Information and communication technology:** ICT was integrated mainly into poverty reduction and governance programmes during the course of the CCF in mid-2000.

Analysis of development challenges from the 2002 Common Country Assessment (CCA) and approaches outlined by the 2003–2007 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) were incorporated into the 2003–2007 CPO. Areas of intervention remained the same, reflecting ongoing national priorities in the areas of governance, poverty reduction and social development, and environmental protection. However, approaches to interventions became more focused (i.e., in line with evolving national challenges and needs, and in response to evaluations of the CCF). The CPO emphasized mainstreaming gender and promoting human rights-based development in all activities; it also highlighted the goal of creating synergy between upstream and downstream activities in order to effectively contribute to development outcomes.

Highlights of the 2003–2007 CPO demonstrate UNDP Jordan’s alignment with national priorities and include:

- **Community development:** Building on a network of Jordan Information Technology Community Centres throughout the Kingdom; integrating ICT, up-scaling and linking local efforts;
- **Enhanced regional development and decentralization:** Strengthening local capacity and creating an enabling environment for community development; and
- **Support to administrative reform:** Building on previous successes (such as the Aid-Coordination Unit, the database at the Department of Statistics); creating an enabling environment for development, including direct foreign investment and stronger trade and service-based relations with other countries.

In particular, the CPO emphasized the major contributions of UNDP to poverty reduction and

governance, which most closely reflect the UNDP mandate. These areas are also where UNDP enjoys a comparative institutional advantage. For this reason, and because of limited UNDP resources, support for environmental protection—including water management and other large-scale activities—was limited to assisting in local-level planning and raising awareness through community development efforts. Other agencies with more resources were responsible for implementing the larger projects in the country.

The CPO clearly demonstrated the dual role of UNDP as a catalyst and facilitator of development, in line with both the organization’s institutional strengths and the country’s national priorities, particularly the recent Government of Jordan *National Economic and Social Development Plan 2004–2006*. During the course of the CPO cycle, UNDP Jordan also strengthened its media and advocacy role, hiring a media specialist for this purpose.

In terms of relevance and responsiveness to emerging national needs and priorities, several observations emerge from the two UNDP programmes under review:

- Projects implemented under the 1998–2002 CCF cycle may have been too numerous and scattered, and were often too focused on capacity building and training without strategically linking these efforts to longer-term institutional and organizational development;
- Both programmes were relatively strong in the governance sector, but weaker in responding to and having an effect on poverty reduction;
- Through overall community development, the CPO cycle was more coherently designed within a strategic approach to issues such as poverty reduction and environmental protection. It also demonstrated—through both up- and downstream activities—the integral links between these two areas, and more generally, with governance;
- Although decentralization has remained a main focus and priority of the Government

of Jordan, neither the CCF nor the CPO incorporated this goal into project activities;

- Mainstreaming of both gender and human rights remains somewhat incomplete in UNDP Jordan country programmes;
- Developing and articulating an overall strategic vision underpinning UNDP programmes in Jordan would be helpful in demonstrating the strategic positioning of UNDP, both with regard to medium- and long-term goals, as well as in support of Jordan's achievement of a strong knowledge-based economy; and
- Challenges remain in enhancing UNDP responsiveness to national needs—as voiced by other sectors of the society, such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs—and in supporting the government in encouraging and promoting citizen participation in the articulation of their needs and the development of their communities.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNDP TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS IN JORDAN

While it is difficult to attribute major changes at the national level exclusively to UNDP interventions, both the CCF and the CPO cycles demonstrate several areas where UNDP, in collaboration with national partners, has made certain contributions to development results in Jordan. In particular, UNDP has:

- Taken the lead in establishing the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group (DLCG) to coordinate aid between bilateral and multi-lateral donors and the government through the Resident Coordinator's office;
- Played a critical catalyst role in attracting and leveraging other donor support to contribute to Jordan's development;
- Played a pivotal role coordinating development interventions with other United Nations (UN) agencies as a leader in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT);
- Enjoyed a good reputation and good relations with the Government of Jordan as a politically neutral agency;

- Been instrumental in supporting the government in strengthening the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) as the government agency responsible for coordinating and planning development initiatives;
- Been an effective facilitator in supporting the Government of Jordan in undertaking or joining regional development initiatives, particularly in the critical area of environmental protection and management;
- Made inroads in inviting and promoting the participation of CSOs and NGOs at the community level; and
- Worked to support the government in developing closer, more effective and sustained partnerships with the private sector.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

A number of key issues point to lessons learned and emerging opportunities.

EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP STRATEGY

UNDP Jordan's concentration on three main thematic areas remains closely in line with national priorities. Compared to the earlier CCF cycle, the CPO was more coherently conceptualized to highlight integral linkages between poverty reduction, good governance and environmental protection. This coherence was also reflected in more strategic attention to the comparative institutional advantages and strengths of UNDP as a catalyst and facilitator of development initiatives, which was most pronounced and successful in the area of governance. UNDP has been effective in contributing to the government's capacity to monitor and report progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to which the Government of Jordan is fully committed.

In leveraging funds and promoting development goals, UNDP draws on its leadership role in creating partnerships between various government agencies, donors and other stakeholders. However, demonstrating conceptual coherence

may not always translate into strategic coherence at the project level. Challenges and constraints emanate from the complex issues facing the country, as well as from the interests and priorities of other players, including the government, bilateral donors and, in particular, those with more extensive resources to invest in Jordan. Efforts may still be needed to link the objectives and outcomes of specific interventions. UNDP has yet to expand collaborative efforts and partnerships with CSOs and NGOs that are not designated among the official organizations.¹ Enhancing citizen participation in development also remains a challenge. Other challenges remain in operationalizing and mainstreaming the cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights into actual programmes and projects.

EXIT STRATEGIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

UNDP Jordan does not explicitly integrate exit and sustainability strategies into programme and project design in a consistent manner.² This is due to many factors, including the relatively small contributions of UNDP alongside a range of government and other donors. However, the potential for ensuring the sustainability of interventions is there, especially given the close working relationship of UNDP and MOPIC, the main UNDP government partner in Jordan.

The oversight of development activities by MOPIC demonstrates that the Government of Jordan is already in a position to adopt and expand processes and outcomes of successful projects. The self-defined role of UNDP primarily as a catalyst and facilitator of development helps focus its strengths and contributions mainly in terms of policy dialogue, policy advice and advocacy (where the notion of an exit strategy or sustainability is a more of a qualitative consideration), and in demonstration of successful pilot or small-scale projects (where up-scaling, and

hence, sustaining these interventions, is perhaps more feasible).

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

In recent years, the Jordan CO has done an excellent job of strengthening staff capacity, mainly through courses and training in the English language, presentation and communication skills, and gender mainstreaming. Re-profiling the UNDP CO and implementing regular meetings involving both programme and operations staff has contributed to strengthening intra-office communications. Effective implementation of the in-house learning management system has generally strengthened CO staff management, communication and leadership skills. However, there remain some concerns about linking these advances to further training and capacity development in strategic thinking as part of institutionalizing a more holistic approach to programme development.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

UNDP Jordan is realizing the implications of inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems, which are indispensable tools in planning and programming. This is not a problem exclusive to UNDP, as it also characterizes operations in the UN, MOPIC and other development agencies. During the 1998–2002 CCF cycle, references to management arrangements for monitoring and evaluation were limited. In the 2003–2007 CPO, a plan for monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme cycle was developed. However, monitoring and evaluation have not been fully integrated into the management function at either the programme or project levels. Efforts to undertake joint monitoring exercises with UNDP partners and integrate these into evaluations of outcomes and impact would be valuable. In addition, special attention needs to be focused

1 NGOs founded by royal decree.

2 Despite some instances of implementing a clear exit strategy (e.g., the Balqa project, the Department of Statistics Strengthening Project, the National Human Development Report and MDG reporting processes), it is fair to say that it is not the case with all—or some of the largest—programmes.

on adopting inclusive approaches and strengthening national counterparts' abilities in this regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Keeping in mind the achievements, challenges and lessons learned through UNDP interventions during the 1998–2002 CCF and the 2003–2007 CPO cycles, and mindful of Jordan's declared objective of preparing and strengthening the country's institutions and people to play a competitive role as a knowledge economy in the global environment, this evaluation presents specific recommendations for enhancing the strategic positioning and contribution of UNDP Jordan to development results. Key recommendations include:

STRENGTHEN THE STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP

- Strengthen the strategic positioning and image of UNDP Jordan as a neutral player through innovative steps to promote effective dialogue and partnerships with a range of CSOs, private-sector organizations and local communities;
- Strengthen the comparative and institutional advantage of UNDP by linking projects and activities with regional initiatives of the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF), such as the Programme on Governance in the Arab Region and others, as well as with relevant South-South Cooperation networks;
- Strengthen development results through a coherent strategy and holistic approach to intersections and overlap in the three thematic areas; design specific programme and project interventions on this basis, taking into account national and local-level efforts to promote gender equality;
- Enhance the strategic focus of UNDP on improving human development in the country through identifying connections between unemployment and poverty, recognizing the effect of economic liberalization through the establishment of Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), and linking these issues as part of a comprehensive human development strategy;
- Strengthen UNDP strategic position, comparative advantage and contribution to national development results by systematic, gender-sensitive and consensus-building approaches to address human rights issues, involving all relevant stakeholders in the society;
- Proceed with exploration of the main development needs identified in the *2004 Jordan National Human Development Report* as a programming guide and tool in future UNDP interventions; translate and operationalize into concrete programme and project interventions and synergies the conceptual dynamism and points of integration of the report across MDGs, Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs), UNDAF and country programmes;
- Distinguish between disseminating information through media and outreach, and advocacy with policy makers, designed to prompt action in order to precipitate change (these are not identical);
- Strategize media messages, advocacy initiatives and campaigns to complement each other, and to reflect and strengthen UNDP institutional advantages, particularly the human rights-based approach underlying the three practice areas of the UNDP country programme in Jordan;
- Utilize successful outcomes from UNDP interventions to design messages in media and advocacy campaigns, for example, the global and national UNDP Human Development Reports, AHDRs, and MDG-related interventions and activities;
- Promote the catalyst role and comparative advantage of UNDP as a knowledge broker and as a neutral agency supporting the human rights-based approach to development; and
- Leverage the strategic position of UNDP in the United Nations Country Team and the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group for enhancing dialogue among key donors to

mobilize resources, harmonizing programming priorities and funding, and maximizing development results.

STRENGTHEN UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

- Develop strategies and approaches for more effective links between up- and downstream levels through an explicitly formulated, holistic, rights-based approach to tackling environmental concerns linked to intended outcomes in the areas of governance and poverty alleviation;
- Connect, at the outset of a project or programming area, the exploration of exit strategies with strategic entry points for institutional and capacity development;
- Consider and integrate options for sustainability (e.g., adoption by national counterparts) into project design, through techniques such as context-specific risk analysis;
- Explore opportunities for joint evaluations, given that many programmes and projects are co-financed, further adopted and/or expanded by various donors and partners. This could be coordinated by the DLCC and would support the intent of the UNDAF exercise;
- Integrate effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into programme and project design and implementation in order to assess development results—i.e. outputs and outcomes;
- Conduct assessments or outcome evaluations at early stages, testing the level of sustainability, identifying areas requiring further improvement—such as strengthening the rights-based approach to gender mainstreaming and the links with poverty and governance interventions—and identifying best practices in order to inform strategic decision-making for future interventions. Such assessments are indispensable for proper planning, budgeting and implementation processes that are conducive to achieving expected outcomes and impact; and

- Correlate evaluative evidence to selected variables that determine the nature and intensity of intermediate and longer-term results and type of recipients, in order to provide information on: the size of investment and implications of cost-sharing; targeted as opposed to non-targeted approaches; effective targeting in terms of poverty and gender sensitivity; outputs and outcomes; political commitment; and partnerships and resources.

STRENGTHEN UNDP SUPPORT IN THE THREE THEMATIC AREAS OF NATIONAL PRIORITY

Democratic governance

- Support the training of an informed and responsible citizenry that participates in addressing the challenges of human development and democratic governance that face the country. Such support should incorporate more systematic attention to the opinions and needs of diverse population groups, including women and youth. In order to strengthen civil society—including NGOs, CSOs, the media sector, other professional networks and stakeholders—this support should be part of a comprehensive strategy that integrates a more systematic, participatory, gender sensitive and consensus-building approach to human rights issues;
- Support decentralization by demonstrating, through community projects, results that can be linked to larger efforts at the national level and by promoting linkages between political, social and environmental interventions within and across UNDP thematic areas. Where relevant, UNDP should promote greater synergy with governance initiatives of other UN agencies and donors. Results of such efforts should be used to engage in political dialogue and policy advice in order to support the Government of Jordan in amending legislation to fully decentralize, rather than occasionally delegate, authority;
- Identify strategic approaches in judicial reform—such as the juvenile justice system—

that stress institutional strengthening and promotion of access to justice. UNDP can effectively leverage its comparative advantage in policy dialogue, advocacy, and as facilitator in order to support the government in revising the laws and legislation that hinder genuine judicial reform. Such reform includes legislative changes to grant full independence to the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) and interventions to strengthen human and financial resources for NCHR to fulfil its mandate;

- Support the Government of Jordan in building the capacity of governorate-level ministries and municipalities, paying particular attention to long-term organizational development and institution-building, not just training of select ministry staff (e.g., budgeting and accounting, service provision). UNDP needs to enhance its support to the Department of Statistics, MOPIC, the Ministry of Environment (MOEn) and departments of the central government, so that these agencies can better utilize and share data and information on poverty, unemployment, household income, etc., with governmental agencies and NGOs at the local level; and
- Support national-level efforts to improve coverage and efficiency of public campaigns on legal education to enhance peoples' knowledge of their rights, based on approaches that are sensitive to poverty and gender. Such efforts should be used to improve criminal investigation techniques, further train the police and judges, and promote citizen safety—for example, to sensitize the police and judiciary in addressing violence against women, including honour killings.

Poverty reduction

- Support the Government of Jordan and relevant stakeholders in strategizing and designing poverty reduction interventions relevant to specific geographical and socio-economic contexts through human development

perspectives (i.e., principles of inclusion, equity and participation, among other aspects). For example, needs and priorities of residents in outlying rural areas will be different from those prevailing in Zarqa, a disadvantaged urban area with high poverty levels. This should entail incorporating analyses of and attention to interests, needs, priorities and participation of diverse segments of the population, including attention to mainstreaming gender and human rights as integral to project design and implementation;

- Demonstrate, through pilot and small-scale projects, synergy between interventions in poverty reduction and results in other thematic and cross-cutting areas in order to support the government in creating the necessary synergies between poverty reduction, job creation, educational reform, vocational training, strengthening of the private sector and deepening partnerships with government; strengthen linkages with the cross-cutting issues of youth and gender;
- Support and strengthen the capacity of the government and NGOs in accurate analysis of causes and consequences of patterns of poverty and unemployment so as to guide interventions;
- Strengthen capacity at community-level NGOs and CSOs in order to design and implement projects. Support NGOs and CSOs in linking poverty reductions projects and interventions with interventions in environmental protection, conservation and management, as in the case of, for example, poverty reduction and job creation through the promotion of eco-diversity. UNDP can also help strengthen engagement between the Government of Jordan, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector in order to encourage partnerships between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the government in order to prepare a legal and economic framework for expanding SMEs;
- Build exit strategies and long-term sustainability into project design. For example, link

capacity-building or training of community members or CSO staff to long-term institutional development and sustainability; integrate leveraging of other donor resources, including government, in order to foster national ownership, continuity and replication; and

- Support the government's economic liberalization and reform in order to incorporate attention to benefits and drawbacks of QIZs and other economic initiatives, by addressing specific legislative, economic, social and environmental needs and priorities in this sector, paying particular attention to incorporating gender issues and patterns of employment, and commitment to human rights.

Environmental sustainability

- Strengthen policy dialogue, advocacy and support to the Government of Jordan, in order to raise the priority of an area that has had minimal government cost-sharing to date, but which has distinct implications for long-term sustainability of current initiatives;
- Support the government in ensuring more effective cooperation between relevant central government ministries—in particular, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, including its National Energy Research Centre—and government agencies at the governorate and municipal levels;
- Strengthen efforts within the UNDP programme and at government and non-governmental levels to adopt a more holistic approach to creating synergies among environment-related interventions implemented by various UN agencies and bilateral donors in Jordan, as well as between and across thematic areas. This would require demonstrating, in

small-scale or pilot projects at the downstream level, the results of a holistic approach to interventions in support of environmental sustainability and human development, such as in capacity-building initiatives as a means of tackling poverty;

- Strengthen support to national efforts to mainstream environmental protection into economic and political legislation aimed at promoting economic liberalization and strengthening the role of the private sector in economic development. UNDP should leverage its capacity in communication, outreach and advocacy to work with government agencies and non-governmental stakeholders in promoting citizen awareness, commitment and participation in environmental protection and the long-term behavioural change needed in this area. UNDP projects should also incorporate attention to and participation of diverse population segments, especially women and youth, to strengthen community organizations to implement projects that directly benefit each community's residents;
- Support and strengthen the attention of relevant stakeholders to effectively linking national efforts in order to address the water crisis with interventions in support of biodiversity and development of alternative energy sources, such as biogas; assist national water authorities in developing strategically coherent approaches to environmental sustainability; and
- Support the government and non-governmental sectors in mainstreaming environmental protection issues into the implementation of the national tourism strategy.