

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

5.1 UNDP AND RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

UNDP programmes are highly relevant to GoR's needs. Numerous senior actors in the Rwandan government and public administration confirmed the high degree of coherence of UNDP programmes with their government's needs.

The current debate on Rwanda's development strategy focuses on the emerging EDPRS, where there are two important trends: the promotion of non-agricultural economic growth and social protection.

Partners' and observers' assessments of Rwanda's development policy vary significantly. All agree that the government is in a hurry, obliging its international partners to work hard to keep up with them. Some consider GoR's development policy too ambitious and not sufficiently realistic. However, many agree that GoR displays a strong commitment to development issues in general.

Until 2006, UNDP's key strategy instruments were the first CCF 1998-2001 (of which this evaluation covers only last two years), the second CCF 2002-2006 and the first UNDAF. A mid-term review of the second CCF in 2004 concluded that while many of the UNDP programmes are relevant to GoR policies, the linkage between the second CCF and key government plans is not well articulated.⁵⁸ Conversely, there are several indications of a high degree of relevance:

- The current UNDAF preparation process draws clearly on the concurrent EDPRS process. With operationalization of the One UN reform and the designation of Rwanda as a pilot country, the UNDAF has gained in importance and

many expectations are attached to the new UNDAF, currently in preparation.

- Capacity building is one of the key areas of the GoR's development strategy. It is also a central element in UNDP support, though an element that is still not sufficiently well structured (see section 4.2).
- Rwanda's National Capacity Building Programme was initiated in 2002 with UNDP support and led to the creation of the Human Resources and Institutional Development Agency. The Agency has been assigned a central role in GoR capacity building strategy, although it is not currently supported by UNDP.

5.1.1 ONGOING ADJUSTMENTS TO UNDP STRATEGY

The CCF for 1998-2000 was extended until the end of 2001 to harmonize with the government's PRS process and the programming cycle of all other UN organizations in Rwanda. The CCF for 2002-2006 was the object of a mid-term review in 2004, but the CCF was not explicitly adjusted to reflect this review's recommendations. Changing Rwandan needs and priorities are reflected instead in newer strategy documents. Thus the emerging UNDAF draws its direction from both the UN Reform and the EDPRS.

Examples of UNDP programmes of the second CCF that are highly relevant to GoR policy priorities include: support for the External Finance Unit, the PRS and EDPRS processes; the development of environmental policy and integration of environmental concerns into the EDPRS; capacity development in the justice sector; and the decentralization process.

58 Askwith, Michael and Claudine Zaninka, 'Report of the Mid-Term Review Mission of the UNDP Country Cooperation Framework for Rwanda 2002 -2006', Kigali, Rwanda, 2004.

Numerous GoR testimonials confirmed that UNDP programmes are demand-driven and meeting the needs of GoR plans. Their effect is diminished by weaknesses in project implementation and constraints and unpredictability in UNDP financing.

UNDP's approach in the first half of the evaluation period was not entirely based on an explicit and coherent strategy, notwithstanding statements in some of their strategy documents. The approach stemmed from the post-1994 situation in which emergency response, gap filling and reconstruction operations prevailed. It is largely for this reason that many stakeholders now criticize UNDP for following a strategy that is driven by discrete projects and funding opportunities.

Today, there is an embryonic process of strategy definition in the country office that reflects the need to make more detailed and concrete strategies for key issues, such as human resources management, and cross-cutting issues like gender, environment, M&E and capacity development. Above all, there is an effort underway to define UNDP's strategic position in the Rwandan development context in future years.

UNDP anticipation of and response to changes in the Rwandan development context has varied over the years. Until 2001, UNDP's role was largely focused on reconstruction and gap filling. Since 2001, UNDP has focused increasingly on development support activities and has established the current programme units. Aid coordination has played a growing role since 2005.

The country office's implementation capacities and approaches have fluctuated during the evaluation period, largely as a result of the attention given by the senior management to these issues. Since 2002-2003 internal capacity development has been dealt with more systematically, although much remains to be done. The country office Learning Plan of 2006 defines training needs for 26 employees of the Operations Department and 19 employees of the Programmes Department. The areas of training needs range from adminis-

trative systems (Atlas) to English and French languages, ICT skills, procurement procedures, and project cycle management.

5.1.2 NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

The country office needs a comprehensive and practical strategy. Currently, there is a need to identify and analyze those changes that are likely to affect UNDP in coming years. The emerging internal strategy definition process needs to be consolidated in this regard. While the current UNDAF process is vital for the whole UNCT, it will not provide all the answers that UNDP Rwanda needs. Based on fundamental guidelines, such as the MDGs and the UNDAF, the country office needs a comprehensive and practical strategy framework that can help it strengthen links between its broad policy orientations and its operational systems and mechanisms. This will help the UNDP country office reinforce and maintain its competitiveness in the current Rwandan context in which UNDP contributions, like those of other development partners, will be under increasing scrutiny to determine what they add to Rwanda's development process.

5.2 UNDP'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN RWANDA

Most GoR representatives express a high degree of confidence in UNDP as a partner. For example, MINALOC believes that UNDP enjoys much good will within the government and contributes to Rwanda's development through general support as well as with specific inputs. UNDP is further appreciated for being uncomplicated and a good interlocutor. For example, according to MINALOC, other donors sometimes try to impose their models of decentralization that are not always appropriate for Rwanda. There is also a perception among some government officials that the country office's relative autonomy in decision making gives it an advantage over some development partners that need to consult their head offices for most decisions.

Another example is from a district mayor visited in the north of Rwanda's Western Province who

reported that UNDP had been a good partner, a good communicator, a good collaborator and a good listener who understood their problems. The MOPAN study of 2004⁵⁹ concluded that the UNDP programme in Rwanda is configured to deliver its corporate mandate and is doing so with increasing efficiency.

Strong government leadership has enabled UNDP to effectively exercise its role as a donor coordinator. However, many GoR representatives express concerns about UNDP management capacities and limited financial resources. Several government officials pointed out that UNDP administrative systems and procedures often don't match with its intended strategic scope. Operations are often short-sighted and managed in an *ad hoc* manner. Changes in personnel cause stop-and-go effects in operations. Some government partners find that the activities of UNDP projects seem to be more administration-driven rather than development based. Government officials often reported that they don't know the budget of projects they are working on. Some GoR officials expressed disappointment that steering committees formed in various projects didn't play more active roles in decision making.

UNDP does not fit in the conventional category of donor in Rwanda. Numerous actors emphasized that UNDP is not a donor like the others. There are a number of distinct elements to UNDP Rwanda's identity, including: facilitator, aid coordinator, implementing agency, resource mobilizer and advocate.

UNDP support is currently channeled almost exclusively through the government and support to Rwandan civil society organizations has been minimal. While several NGOs did benefit from UNDP support to the 2003 elections, there are no specific arrangements to form partnerships with civil society organizations and they tend to see UNDP as a partner of the government, not theirs. Civil society organizations, in general, play

vital roles in strengthening democracy and increasing the equity of socio-economic development. Therefore support to them should be part of the UNDP support to a country.

Partnerships with several development partners illustrate UNDP Rwanda's way of working. While there is a general trust in UNDP as a partner, some partners expressed concerns about UNDP's vague strategic focus, weak administrative capacity, insufficient financial resources and instability of human resources, particularly in senior advisory positions. Several still refer to UNDP's weak performance in managing the basket fund for the elections of 2003.

UNDP's key partners raised the following concerns when asked to analyze UNDP management of their development funds:

- Lack of focus and priorities in the UNDP portfolio causes their internal resources (financial and human) to be spread too widely and thinly
- Weaknesses in management capacities, systems and procedures, as well as in technical capacities in some units, for example in the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit
- Insufficient permanent policy and technical capacity within the country office—much of the available advisory capacity is being misused in project management and administrative purposes
- Limited capacities to lead sustained policy dialogues with the government

In aid coordination, there is general trust in UNDP capacity, both from the government and among the donors. The MOPAN assessment of 2004 concluded that UNDP is a strong advocate of donor harmonization in Rwanda and has provided significant leadership and administrative support for efforts so far. However, UNDP's own operations are not always consistent with

59 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), 'Rwanda Country Report', 2004.

good practices. For example, UNDP provides parallel funding in cases where basket funds exist and UNDP information sharing with other development partners has not always been proactive.

Donor coordination and a privileged relationship with the government are widely seen as UNDP's main comparative advantages in Rwanda. UNDP has been effective in using these strengths in its strategic positioning. However, weaknesses discussed in other sections of this report diminish the positive impact of the partnerships.

While all donors recognize UNDP's closeness to the government, some regard this as an important advantage while others see risks in this relationship. Some observers perceive UNDP as unacceptably biased because of its strong link with the government and weak links with civil society organizations. Some development partners recognize UNDP impartiality as an asset, but believe that UNDP does not exercise sufficient political influence over the GoR. Corruption, for example, is a delicate issue that is tackled by UNDP from a purely technical point of view but not politically. Bilateral agencies are more inclined to raise such sensitive issues, though UNDP is in a better position to do so.

UNDP effectiveness in strategic partnerships is reflected in its capacity to mobilize resources from various sources of funding (Table 4), as well as in the high degree of relevance attributed by the government to UNDP activities. The country office has made efforts to systematically and explicitly analyze its comparative advantages in Rwanda.⁶⁰ The result was a suggestion of how to organize UNDP services into the three

categories proposed by the UN reform team: core services, niche services and overlapping services.

5.2.1 UNDP RWANDA AND THE CHANGING ARCHITECTURE OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

UNDP also needs to respond to the challenges brought about by changes in the architecture of aid. The current situation is somewhat paradoxical. While the UN leads the process of aid coordination, alignment and harmonization, it has problems in aligning itself. For example, UNDP development assistance was ranked as low quality (although it has since improved), it maintains a high number of parallel project management units, funding is unpredictable, and it requires its own reporting formats. The One UN reform pilot in Rwanda and UNDAF-related strategy revision are important opportunities for improvement in these areas.

The GoR has shown strong leadership in relation to its development partners. It is capable of managing complex processes, such as the EDPRS. With its capacity continuously increasing, GoR is likely to assume more donor coordination functions, some of which are currently taken care of by the UNDP. This will have significant implications for UNDP operations because it concerns an area that many currently see as UNDP's main area of comparative advantage.

Bringing various donors together has been one of the UNDP strengths since the 1990s and synergies between UNDP supported programmes and those of other development partners have been especially clear in resource mobilization. In most projects supported by the UNDP, there is more than one source of funding. Co-financed projects have evolved into basket funds, which are a key

Table 4. Resource mobilization by UNDP country office units, 2000-2006

GU	SPEMU	JHAGU	SLU	ACU (2005-7)	Total
\$17,269,281	\$6,172,338	\$6,016,250	\$4,090,358	\$2,564,059	\$36,112,286

Source: UNDP Rwanda

Note: GU indicates Governance Unit; SPEMU, Strategic Planning and Economic Management Unit; JHAGU, Justice, HIV-AIDS and Gender Unit; SLU, Sustainable Livelihoods Unit; ACU, Aid Coordination Unit.

60 UNDP Rwanda, 'UNDP Rwanda Strategic Positioning Report', Kigali, Rwanda, Undated.

element in the harmonization process and for reducing transaction costs.

Co-financing can bring about clear synergy gains. While UNDP may manage entire projects, its own funding is often only a minor share of the total budget, insufficient to ensure all the necessary investments. For example, the programme in support of the Supreme Court required means of transportation in rural areas. This could be financed only because a sufficient contribution was made available by the Netherlands.

Other important examples of synergies achieved are in the UNDP/DFID partnership that has taken place in many areas and is likely to be strengthened in the next CCF. DFID envisages a Memorandum of Understanding to define the areas and principles of partnership with UNDP. They have identified three prospective areas of collaboration: economic planning, governance, and aid coordination and harmonization.

There is scope for broader collaboration and related synergies. For example, one of the major sources of support to capacity building is the Multi-sector Capacity Building Programme project, of which the World Bank is the biggest single source of financing. The Human Resources and Institutional Development Agency believes the initiative would benefit greatly if UNDP were to join the project's supporters.

UNDP needs to prepare and adapt to the changing approaches of its key partners who are increasingly moving towards programme-based approach modalities, such as direct budget support. UNDP Rwanda should develop the permanent capacity and expertise required for these new approaches. This task will require coordinated inputs not only from the country office but also from higher levels in UNDP. In the short term, UNDP should improve in those areas where most partners perceive weaknesses, particularly its uneven project design and management capacities (including M&E functions) and technical expertise. If UNDP is able to respond to its internal capacity challenges, then it should be able to adapt to anticipated changes in demand from the GoR.

5.3 UNDP AND UN REFORM IN RWANDA

Recent recommendations for UN reform call for UN organizations to integrate their planning and programming in order to achieve an optimal portfolio mix, enabling the UNCT to produce the best possible response to existing needs by building on the specific competencies of each UN organization throughout their partner countries' policy cycles. This adjustment will require needs and capacity analyses, as well as comparative advantage analysis to determine how each UN organization can best fit into a unified UN delivery team in each country.

Rwanda has been chosen as one of four African countries to pilot this new approach. Participation in Rwanda's pilot for UN reform will enhance UNDP Rwanda's status with the GoR and with the development partners. It will also place greater demands on the country office and generate greater expectations of improved performance and overcoming weaknesses that the country office shares with many other UNDP country offices—weak human resource management, uneven and constantly changing quality of technical and administrative capacities, and inadequate M&E.

The reform is also expected to bring better coordination, collaboration and outcomes among UN organizations. This process has been launched and the UNCT's draft UNDAF for Rwanda is well coordinated with the emerging EDPRS. Playing a lead role in the implementation of the UN reform will require UNDP Rwanda to demonstrate greater consistency and transparency, as well as a careful, sustained effort to build understanding, confidence and trust among members of the United Nations in Rwanda.

5.3.1 UN REFORM AND UNDP'S EVOLVING ROLE IN RWANDA

Rwanda's selection as a pilot country for the One UN reform presents the country office with an opportunity. It will be demanding and risky, yet there is potentially much to be gained from it. To succeed, the country office needs to be guided by

clear and transparent planning and monitoring mechanisms. Key development partners in Rwanda, such as DFID, are interested in supporting UNDP and the broader UN system in this pilot. In return, they expect convincing demonstrations of UNDP capacities for sound and well focused programme administration and policy guidance.

An important challenge, for example, will be to improve financial management processes to the point where the country office can produce simple, synoptic reports to meet a wide range of demands in a timely manner. Reporting, in general, and financial reporting, in particular, are areas where development partners have found UNDP Rwanda at its weakest.

UNDP Rwanda's role in the UN reform pilot will benefit from the government's perception that the UNDP is the lead UN organization in the country and that UNDP can be counted on to help them align the UN organizations with the government's priorities while drawing on the real comparative advantages of each organization. The UNCT should identify concrete areas where they can work with government partners to enhance collaboration and coordination among UN organizations in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their support. There is unanimous agreement among international partners, and many within the country office, that UNDP should focus its energy and resources on a narrower range of activities and do these better in the next CCF.

There is still a great deal to do before UN organizations work together consistently as well coordinated partners. The organizations will need to be convinced that they can trust UNDP to play a lead role in UN reform without undermining the position of other UN organizations. Some organizations will need more proof of the benefits of closer collaboration and that these benefits outweigh perceived threats and costs, such as loss of resources and independence of action for their individual organizations.

UNDP Rwanda's experience in facilitating aid coordination among international partners will

help them to play a lead role in coordinating the One UN reform pilot, especially the critical role of building trust among partners. Trust building and enhanced collaboration will require more clarity about what UNDP and the other UN organizations actually do in Rwanda and how they do it. For example, UNDP should begin to share the results of UNDP work with the EDPRS more systematically with UN organizations.

More clarity and consistency will be required from UNDP Rwanda in general and from the office of the Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator in particular. It must be clear when the UNDP is acting on the behalf of the UN system as a whole and when it is acting on behalf of UNDP in particular. As long as the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Resident Representative are embodied in the same person, this distinction will be very important, as it is an abiding source of confusion (and therefore lack of confidence) among other UN organizations. There is need for more clarity and transparency in communicating with other UN organizations regarding the Resident Coordinator's budget and how it is used, versus the Resident Representative's budget and how it is used. Clarity and transparency will be critical as well during negotiations of contribution agreements with major partners, such as DFID following the finalization of the EDPRS and UNDAF expected later in 2007. For example, will DFID sign its upcoming Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP or with the UN system in Rwanda? Whatever decision is taken will have to be clearly explained and justified to the other UN organizations.

There are valuable experiences to build on, for example the collaboration with UNEP on the PEI. This underlined the need for UNDP's own administrative capacities to be strengthened if it is to play a pivotal role in the delivery of the overall UN programme of support to Rwanda's development. In many ways, the PEI saw UNDP and UNEP occupying their respective areas of comparative advantage: UNEP provided strong technical support and UNDP provided in-country

operational capacity for financial management and procurement. But UNDP Rwanda and UNEP did not find it easy to work with one another and the PEI did not find it easy to work with the country office.

5.4 UNDP RWANDA'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND CAPACITIES

This report confirms UNDP's 'privileged' position as one of the GoR's most trusted partners. UNDP has proven its ability to respond throughout the post genocide period—from the period of emergency, through the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, up to the current effort of long term development. The shared perception within the government is that UNDP responds to their priority needs in a timely and demand-driven manner, has been very flexible when the needs arise and has provided leadership in the coordination of aid.

UNDP is contributing to the implementation of Rwanda's Vision 2020 and the Rwanda PRS. UNDP contribution in the areas of democratic governance, socio-economic policy and economic management, the fight against HIV/AIDS, the promotion of gender equality and the protection of the environment—which are in line with government priorities—have helped the country achieve real gains in recent years.

UNDP has a different status from other development partners in Rwanda and a unique comparative advantage in the Rwandan context based on its neutrality—both among donors and between donors and partner governments—and based on its normative role when following up on internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. It has privileged access to national policy makers and commensurate potential to work on sensitive issues and to provide independent advice on emerging issues.

5.4.1 CAPACITY ISSUES

Conversely, the UNDP country office suffers from limited human and financial resources. They lack the necessary critical mass of profes-

sional staff to match the range of activities in which UNDP is involved. There is a high rate of staff turnover and, until recently, the office of the Resident Representative was occupied for months by temporary officers on a stop-gap basis. The importance of having adequate and qualified personnel who are not under constant pressure from routine administrative work cannot be overstated.

Ad-hoc arrangements have been more the rule than the exception in the Rwanda country office due to the frequent turnover of professional staff. The country office has five international staff, eight national professionals, and a handful of short-term interns and national support staff. It is very difficult for this kind of country office to function to its full potential without more continuity among its professional staff.

5.5 UNDP'S EVOLVING ROLE IN RWANDA

UNDP's role in Rwanda continues to evolve rapidly. The first CCF 1998-2001 was still a programme of post-emergency response. UNDP was involved in a vast array of sectors. The second CCF in 2002-2006 was the first 'development' oriented programme in the post-war period and more focused, though still broad in scope given the modest resources available to UNDP Rwanda. It was the first 'development' oriented programme in the post-war period. The emerging third CCF promises to be both well integrated within the new UNDAF and to have a more focused strategy. UNDP programming will be concentrated in one area of ongoing concern—strengthening capacities for good governance—and one area of emerging concern—ensuring the environmental sustainability of Rwanda's socio-economic development.

Even as UNDP Rwanda's role in the country continues to evolve rapidly, UNDP continues to be a privileged and trusted partner of the government. At the time of the evaluation, 2007 was promising to be a challenging year with the EDPRS, UNDAF and UN reform all converging. This convergence would likely place heavy demands on UNDP Rwanda's limited capacities.

Key factors likely to influence UNDP Rwanda's role in Rwanda over the next UNDAF period and beyond are the One UN reform and UNDP Rwanda's evolving role within the UN system. Others include:

- Rwanda's Vision 2020, the emerging EDPRS and UNDP ability to define a sustainable niche in their delivery, given the changing architecture of aid in Rwanda
- The rural-urban divide in Rwanda and UNDP ability to help GoR bridge this widening gap
- National political stability and UNDP capacity to help GoR maintain political stability while promoting equity and democratic reform
- Regional stability and UNDP capacity to play a constructive role within the UN system in promoting regional dialogue and harmony

5.5.1 DEFINING A SUSTAINABLE NICHE IN THE DELIVERY OF RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Some government partners, for example the environment agencies, expressed concerns about UNDP Rwanda's administrative and technical capacities. However, others did not express concern and appreciated UNDP flexibility in responding to their requests. International partners and the country office's own officers expressed concerns about the dispersion of UNDP Rwanda's programmes.

UNDP Rwanda's emerging role in the One UN reform pilot will enhance its status among government partners, but the country office will need to work hard to define and play a relevant role in the rapidly changing context of aid in Rwanda. UNDP will need to demonstrate a high degree of effectiveness and adaptability if it is to continue to have a credible niche in a context where GBS now constitutes almost half of Official Development Assistance in Rwanda. While the UNDP clearly has a privileged relationship with the government, it also has significant deficiencies—described elsewhere in this evaluation—that need to be addressed.

The use of GBS is expanding in Rwanda and similar instruments are increasing in importance at the sectoral level. The government's capacity for managing these processes is steadily improving. UNDP Rwanda will need to avoid finding itself in competition with government partners, rather than in support of their coordination functions. UNDP will need to define new niches, building on the UNDAF process that has outlined UNDP's broad future orientations, and credibly occupy them with real expertise in well defined areas of focus.

Partners in Rwanda underlined the need for UNDP to be more transparent, to provide clearer and more timely reporting, and to enhance the reliability of the core resources they bring to the table. Improvements in these areas can strengthen the country office's credibility and its capacity to collaborate with partners.

UNDP in Rwanda plays more than one role: donor, facilitator, spokesperson, catalyst, special government partner, and so on. It needs to be clear which role it is playing at any given moment. Claims to a given role in a given context should be transparent and plausible. For example, if UNDP is to maintain a credible role as spokesperson for the international community, then it needs to demonstrate that its close relationship with the GoR does not compromise its capacity to assess government actions (or inactions) with sufficient objectivity.

The One UN reform pilot will highlight the importance of playing a clear and transparent role within the UN family as well. UNDP's role within the UNDAF must be elaborated upon in a CCF that lays out, for the benefit of all partners, its guiding vision and strategy for achieving it in the context of the One UN approach.

Sharpening the focus of the UNDP Rwanda programme will make it easier to enhance the consistency of its technical expertise in core areas, another need mentioned frequently by international and government partners. A more focused UNDP programme can be administered more

efficiently, but it can only be achieved with stronger human resource management. It should avoid, for example, using highly qualified technical or policy specialists to implement procurement procedures, or having generalist managers participate in policy dialogues where more highly qualified sectoral specialists are needed. Both problems have been recurrent in recent years, damaging staff morale and UNDP Rwanda's delivery capacity and reputation.

5.5.2 THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL

Another issue raised by a number of international and government partners as well as civil society organizations was the need for UNDP Rwanda to 'stay in touch' with the reality of Rwandan development outside the capital and other major towns. Rwanda's rapidly growing agrarian population inhabits a crowded rural landscape with few economic opportunities and a bitter legacy of socio-political division. Since 1994, many Rwandans have returned from surrounding countries and issues of land ownership and tenure continue to cause concern.⁶¹ Developments in the impoverished rural areas will play a critical role in determining Rwanda's long term stability. There is a perception among many partners that the UNDP programme has become more focused on upstream activities in Kigali, even when these are related to decentralization. This entails the risk that UNDP and its capacity for sound policy advice could be compromised if it doesn't maintain a clear and up-to-date understanding of conditions in the countryside, where 85 percent of the population lives.

After its people, land is Rwanda's most important asset and a cornerstone of the economy. Rwandan social and cultural traditions are closely tied to the land. Growing numbers of landless people, livestock herds and urban-rural inequality all exacerbate tensions surrounding rural land

scarcity.⁶² In this context, it is critical for UNDP Rwanda to stay well informed on efforts to enhance the quality of health, education, basic infrastructure, and services and agriculture-sector support at local levels outside Rwanda's major centres. Staying informed about the effectiveness of efforts to empower local populations and other dimensions of decentralization will only be possible with improved M&E systems. Together with the government and international partners, the efficacy of all activities supported by UNDP—such as support for decentralization, support for decentralized environmental management, and support for decentralized justice systems—need to be systematically and reliably measured. A stronger dialogue with Rwanda's civil society organizations would help to strengthen the country office's capacity to track evolving conditions in rural areas.

5.5.3 MAINTAINING POLITICAL AND REGIONAL STABILITY WHILE PROMOTING EQUITY AND DEMOCRACY

Whatever happens in Rwanda over the coming decades will have consequences far beyond its own borders. While still economically marginal, the country is at the centre of the western Great Lakes region, one of Africa's densest and most volatile populations. As the world saw in the late 1990s and early 2000s, events in Rwanda have tremendous effects on the neighbouring countries. The security situation in Rwanda, while vastly improved, was still being carefully monitored at the time of the evaluation. The same can be said for the western Great Lakes region more generally, particularly eastern Congo.

The GoR's approach to regional issues has been highly proactive in recent years. Regional integration is a key pillar of Rwanda's Vision 2020 and late in 2006, Rwanda (along with Burundi) was provisionally accepted into the East Africa Community, an established regional

61 Van Hoyweghen, Saskia, 'The Urgency of Land and Agrarian Reform in Rwanda', *African Affairs*, Vol. 98, No. 392, July 1999, pp 353-372.

62 Kairaba, A, 'Integrating Land Issues into PRS and the Broader Development Agenda—Rwanda Country Case Study', paper presented at regional workshop on land issues in Africa and the Middle East, Kampala, Uganda, 29 April - 2 May 2002.

trade association of neighbours to the east. This membership presents both opportunities and challenges. In the short term, Rwanda risks being swamped with goods from its larger eastern neighbours, but the GoR is betting that East Africa Community accession will stimulate the development of trade, infrastructure, tourism and so on while allowing Rwanda to define a lucrative niche for itself as an intermediary between the three original East Africa Community countries and the resource-rich francophone region west of Lake Kivu.

Many analysts would suggest that, if Rwanda is to derive the expected benefits from regional integration, it will have to take on this role of bridge

between the eastern Congo and the East Africa Community. Otherwise it faces considerable risk of remaining a backwater of the community, with much cost to local industries that can't compete and little commensurate longer-term benefit. This analysis underlines Rwanda's strong national interest in ensuring stability in the Congo and its strong vested interest in the ongoing success of UN peacekeeping efforts there. In its evolving role at the centre of a single UN, UNDP Rwanda may be called upon to play some non-traditional roles, helping to strengthen functional links across the border for example, between a range of UN supported initiatives and other initiatives that serve to strengthen the Congo's delicate stability.