UNDP’S INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION BRIEFS 2002–2016

Independent Evaluation Office, September 2018
United Nations Development Programme
The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts independent country programme evaluations, previously called assessments of development results, to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to country-level development results. The evaluations also chronicle the effectiveness of UNDP strategies backing national efforts to achieve development results. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board. Between 2002 and 2016, the Independent Evaluation Office completed 105 independent country programme evaluations worldwide, covering nearly 62 percent of countries with UNDP programmes.

It gives me great pleasure to present the evaluation briefs of all 105 evaluations conducted by the IEO since 2002. These briefs highlight the relevance of UNDP’s work and approach to national development priorities, its effectiveness in achieving and sustaining results, and its strategic positioning and partnerships with other United Nations entities and development organizations.

The purpose of the briefs is to synthesize lessons, and present key findings, conclusions and recommendations to improve the visibility of UNDP country programmes, based on independent evaluative evidence. All briefs as well as the full evaluation reports are available at the IEO website (www.undp.org/ieo) and the Evaluation Resource Center (https://erc.undp.org).

I am confident that readers will find the briefs helpful in further improving the accessibility and utility of evaluation recommendations.

Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office
AFRICA

ANGOLA
BENIN
BOTSWANA
BURKINA FASO
CAMEROON
CÔTE D’IVOIRE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
ETHIOPIA (2006)
ETHIOPIA (2016)
GABON
GHANA
KENYA
LIBERIA
MALAWI
MAURITANIA
MOZAMBIQUE
NIGER
NIGERIA
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
RWANDA
SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE
SENEGAL
SEYCHELLES
SIERRA LEONE
UGANDA
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE
Angola’s long period of conflict ended in 2002, and in 2010, a new Constitution was adopted. Now a middle-income country, with oil and diamond resources, Angola still scores low on the human development index, given a highly unequal distribution of wealth. Significant challenges include strengthening security, realizing constitutional rights and upholding the right to participate in decision-making.

As Angola moved from a postwar country to one focused more on medium- and long-term sustainable development, UNDP programmes shifted accordingly. From 2005 to 2008, the organization addressed issues related to poverty reduction and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, environmental conservation and protection, and the response to HIV and AIDS. The emphasis from 2009 to 2013 narrowed to three strategic objectives on poverty, the environment and sustainable development, and democratic governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2005 to 2011.

UNDP’s support was aligned to national priorities and the move to a development orientation as conflict wound down. Some of its best results came from introducing a debate on decentralization and negotiating related sensitivities. UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Territorial Administration on a pilot project in 15 municipalities in five provinces based on a national process of discussion and reflection. This culminated in 2007 in the approval of Law 2/07, through which the Government launched an administrative ‘deconcentration’ process aimed at future decentralization. UNDP’s intervention enabled greater civil society participation in the mechanisms of consultation and support for decision-making, established by law for municipal and provincial structures.

A number of UNDP initiatives were successful in helping to build capacities and advance legislation. In promoting gender equality, UNDP strengthened the Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women, and supported the drafting of the National Gender Policy and the Domestic Violence Law, two very significant contributions. Assistance provided to the National Demining Institute (INAD) and to the National Intersectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (CNIDAH) transferred knowledge and gave continuity to demining work as it moved under the leadership of national institutions. Angola is now in compliance with Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention, which relates to mine destruction. Mine clearance has yielded significant results in terms of security as well as improved market access, communication, employment, community development and infrastructure.

Towards poverty reduction and the MDGs, UNDP participated in a multisectoral finance group that encouraged the creation of a microfinance unit in the National Bank of Angola. Expanded management capacity in the national HIV and AIDS programme was leveraged by resources, administered with UNDP assistance, under the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In 2005, Angola had only one testing centre and five counselling centres; by 2012, the numbers had soared to 50 and 350, respectively, allowing universal access to treatment of an estimated 250,000 people with HIV, up from 600 in 2005.

Despite these achievements, the programme contributed less than expected in a number of areas, particularly poverty alleviation, where results were not evident. In shifting to a development focus, a broad dispersion of funds occurred, resulting in many small projects...
that lacked appropriate strategic planning. Without a results-oriented approach to its programmes, with a clear theory of change, UNDP was unable to convey a vision for how it would achieve sustainable results or effectively demonstrate its added value. Outside the issue of decentralization, the Government did not consider UNDP’s actions to be sufficiently proactive.

Stronger projects, such as on decentralization, benefited from positive relationships between UNDP and the Government. But for the most part, there was limited dialogue between UNDP and partners at the highest levels of decision-making and at various levels of implementation. Reasons included challenges in dealing with institutional hierarchy, low importance given to external aid and perceptions of UNDP’s inefficient bureaucracy.

Efficiency was low across all programme areas, mainly due to unmet deadlines, the inefficient use of funds, and low implementation and achievement of targets. The lack of project management guidelines adjusted to the context and a more robust organizational structure, such as leaders for each of the projects or commissions for funding, contributed to delays and wasted resources, in some cases significantly jeopardizing project execution. The excessively restricted nature of certain pilot initiatives also led to low efficiency and effectiveness.

A lack of proper knowledge management limited chances for synergies across projects and the learning that can bolster human development results. Coordination with other UN agencies similarly fell short. While the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was oriented to the attainment of common UN objectives, results are still scarce and hindered by the relatively small number of joint programmes, duplicated efforts, and low cost-efficiency and effectiveness. Some projects brought agencies together, but partnership was mainly apparent to the extent that participants distributed tasks to each other.

UNDP’s strategic positioning over the period of the evaluation was demonstrated by its ability to foster debate on key development themes, which drove advances on a number of national policies. But overall, it did not use its influence well. It needs to evolve from scattered projects approach to greater specialization, particularly in decentralization, governance, human development and poverty reduction, all areas that demand a more coordinated and strategic approach. Also key will be more effective communication mechanisms so that the Government and other partners learn about and make use of UNDP’s added value and comparative advantages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) should assist UNDP Angola to develop the next programme with clearer and logical theories of change for each agreed outcome.
- UNDP Angola needs to strengthen formal and informal means of proactive dialogue with Angolan partners at the level of decision-making, and with technical implementation staff.
- UNDP Angola should concentrate interventions in fewer and more strategic areas where it can add more value. It should avoid the necessity of managing projects with smaller budgets where UNDP’s contribution cannot be sustained.
- UNDP Angola should improve knowledge management and better communicate the results already obtained. It should reinforce the exchange of knowledge and the use of UNDP’s specialized networks to generate and promote learning that can strategically feed into timely and better informed decision-making.
- UNDP Angola needs to improve efficiency in operations and should invest in an added-value flow analysis of existing operations processes, which are not adequately understood by some staff in programme and operations.
- UNDP Angola needs to improve programme efficiency to avoid delays and promote better articulation and communication between operations and programme units and between UNDP and stakeholders.
- In coordination with the RBA, the country office should examine ways of improving interagency efforts, learning from what has worked well elsewhere in the region, to strengthen coordination of the United Nations System.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board.

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Benin faces the challenges of environmental depletion, a high population growth rate, a largely informal economy, and weak and obsolete industrial and communication infrastructure. Recognizing such challenges, in 2006 Benin opted for fundamental changes that will transform it over the next 20 years. Through wide consultations and the participation of all constituents of its society, Benin acquired tools enabling it to face its future with more confidence. Major challenges threatening development have been identified, together with corresponding actions to address them.

UNDP has focused its activities on contributing to four national priorities: poverty reduction, the fight against AIDS, access to social services, and the rule of law and a peaceful social climate. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2008.

UNDP used its comparative advantages, such as its perceived neutrality in the championing of delicate and sensitive macro-level policy subjects, to help Benin take a step forward in combating poverty. Advocacy resulted in resource mobilization from multiple donors, channelled to key activities related to elections and a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, among others. The adoption of decentralized and participatory mechanisms improved the national capacity to develop pro-poor policies.

In its environment programme, UNDP supported the Ministry of Environment, at both the central and deconcentrated levels, in developing capacities to manage environmental protection and climate change issues. This was accomplished by linking UNDP regional expertise, UN mechanisms and institutions such as the Drylands Development Centre, international donors, local stakeholders and UNDP projects.

Despite the importance of gender issues, these were not given sufficient priority. UNDP targeted women directly through two main interventions: microcredit and a pilot project in leadership training, representation and participation of women in public life. Although women participated and benefited from these projects, the impact of microcredit on women’s income and economic development remained low. It was too early to identify impacts on women’s representation and participation. In general, UNDP interventions lacked clear directions and indicators to make its contribution on gender issues truly effective.

Almost all projects were linked with national priorities and designed jointly by Benin and UNDP. While contributions to major policy documents such as “Emerging Benin’ were highly strategic, less positive was the relevance of UNDP support to increase the use of social services, under the overall objective of reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and improving health and education. Shortfalls in effectiveness comprised a lack of leadership in supporting the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis with the BenInfo database, and withdrawal from a direct contribution to the fight against corruption.

It was not clear how regional projects, such as the Inventory of Governance in Africa or the Niger River Basin, managed directly by UNDP in New York, contributed to UNDP effectiveness in supporting national objectives. The UNDP coordination role and related contributions risked dispersing the organization’s interventions, with work on small arms control an example of such dispersion.

With the election of a new president in 2006, who...
brought an important message of change in governance, UNDP realigned its cooperation programme, but there were no indications of restructuring ongoing projects to support the revised outcomes. UNDP dependency on external funding may have influenced its strategic choices and threatened the optimal alignment of its interventions to its internal capacities, though not necessarily to Benin’s needs.

A major weakness of UNDP’s contribution resides in the sustainability of results. Without the consolidation of results achieved by UNDP and more government effort to tackle institutional issues, benefits may not be maintained. This issue is exemplified by the HIV/AIDS project, funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. A year after UNDP withdrawal, national capacities to maintain results remained weak, particularly in the management of drug procurement. Results already seem to be in regression.

The UNDP strategy of concentrating much of its programme on pilot projects constitutes a serious sustainability challenge. Successful pilot projects that are not followed by capitalization and replication are not a sustainable use of resources. African countries are awash with small development initiatives left to populations that are incapable of sustaining activities after the end of external support. One adverse effect of such experiments is demoralizing the local population.

The analysis of the project planning process revealed a prevalence of an iterative approach. Project identification seemed to have been based more on ad hoc opportunities than on a systematic strategy. This suggests that results-based management was not integrated in the country office programme management toolbox. Recurrent problems included delays in annual work plan approval; delays in mobilizing counterpart government funds; weakness of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism; lack of indicators; and deficiency in communication. Streamlining management tools and the reporting system are key elements to increasing UNDP performance in transforming resources into useful development changes.

On the whole, UNDP’s strategic positioning allows it to play an appropriate role; its programmes are relevant, highly responsive and effective. Improving two factors, programme efficiency and results sustainability, would further bolster its capacity to support Benin in facing its development challenges.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should place priority on sectors and themes where its expertise is recognized, rather than on those where fund mobilization alone is more feasible.
- UNDP should strengthen linkages between strategic policy initiatives at the central level and operational interventions at local levels.
- The current strategy of concentrating much of the programme on pilot projects constitutes a threat to sustainability. UNDP should concentrate on expanding and networking its existing successful interventions by limiting short-term interventions to those that impact ongoing ventures. It should also invest in projects’ second phases, with clearly defined activities based on previous accomplishments and a transfer of ownership.
- UNDP project exit strategies should be planned to ensure that the partner can sustain key project components.
- UNDP should make full use of its strategic positioning in handling subjects in which it has a comparative advantage and is trusted as a neutral party, including in setting up a common strategic platform among donors, which will ease the donors’ pressure on public administration.
- UNDP should reinforce its knowledge management practices in order to systematically identify and reinvest in best practices in all its supported projects.
- UNDP should capitalize on non-project activities. Advocacy activities, even if conducted outside of projects, should be more focused on common government and UNDP strategic objectives and be results-oriented.
- UNDP should reinforce synergies available from existing expertise inside its own structure.
- UNDP should update the practical knowledge of results-based management, including risk management.
- UNDP should strengthen and be more proactive in its communication with partners.
- UNDP should develop alternative models of providing development assistance, such as public–private partnerships, especially in key sectors for Benin’s economic and human development.

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Botswana is well known for having one of the world’s highest economic growth rates, but still needs to translate huge wealth from diamond resources into a sustainable level of poverty reduction. Significant challenges have come from HIV/AIDS, although the country made good progress on the Millennium Development Goals. It is widely considered to be one of the leading countries in Africa with regard to good governance, a reflection of its generally high quality of institutions, independent legal system and relatively low level of corruption.

UNDP has provided support in the areas of poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, governance, and energy and the environment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2008.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES, 2004-2008: $76.9 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008**

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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Botswana</td>
<td>73%</td>
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**PROGRAMME BUDGETED FUNDS BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2008 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Funds ($ millions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS and gender</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP-supported interventions in Botswana have generally been effective and responded well to national development needs, although impacts have often been limited to target groups with a fairly small number of people. The importance of UNDP support is highlighted by the fact that the organization is the only active development partner in most of its programme areas.

The most notable achievements on HIV/AIDS took place in strengthening institutional capacity. Key contributions included helping to establish umbrella HIV/AIDS organizations, strengthening the Ministry of Education’s response to the epidemic and supporting subnational structures.

Governance programme achievements were promising but not entirely fulfilled. In poverty reduction and economic diversification, activities were pertinent and well-conceived, but limited in impact due to government capacity constraints and policy factors. The Multi-sectoral Committee on Poverty Reduction was felt to be taking the correct approach, for instance, but was highly dependent on a short-term international policy adviser and other external inputs.

UNDP support was instrumental and decisive in work on energy and the environment, assisting, for example, in the adoption of the Community-based Natural Resources Management Policy. But the high number of interventions brought challenges in terms of workload and maintaining the focus of the programme.

Gender equality and mainstreaming have featured across interventions, and backed an increase in women’s political participation and steps to respond to gender-based violence, among other achievements. There was a tendency for patchwork treatment of gender, however; an explicit strategy and specific human resources were needed.

Sustainability was a cross-cutting programmatic concern, but did not always lead to genuine national ownership. In community interventions, the need to respond to beneficiaries’ immediate needs and priorities was a continuous challenge. In institutional projects, adequate capacity-strengthening activities, such as training events, took place, but not always within the framework of a comprehensive strategy. While some projects had a sustainability strategy, others did not.

UNDP had a prominent position in supporting key civil society organizations, yet some stakeholders felt that they should have greater and more meaningful involvement in the country programme.

Aid coordination was also an area in which the organization could have made a bigger contribution; there were signs that the Resident Coordinator was beginning to assume this role. Stronger focus on the principles of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness could enhance UNDP’s delivery of development support.
Responsiveness to government needs stemmed from the fact that a large amount of programme funding came from the Government, although its share in the environment was smaller than in other practice areas, due to the high volume of Global Environment Facility funds. As a rule, all projects had a steering committee to include stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Despite an adequate match between national policies and country programme objectives, interventions did not always fully support the achievement of these objectives. The identification of core problems for projects and the definition of subsequent project purposes were not always clear. Institutional frameworks were not always successfully selected, which may explain the lack of buy-in by national counterparts in some projects.

Technical assistance absorbed a sizeable share of funding. It was generally appreciated for its good quality and relevant contributions, although some stakeholders commented that it was insufficient, a notion that may be based on a misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities. Overall, its effect on strengthening national capacities and sustainability was questioned.

Competent and experienced human resources are a key asset of the country office, but UNDP’s bureaucracy and procedural delays were criticized. Projects in all programme areas were reasonably efficient, when measured with disbursement rates, implementation of activities and production of outputs. Capacity constraints in the country office caused administrative delays, but most stakeholders did not consider these serious. To enhance efficiency, financial monitoring and reporting should be strengthened.

As a key development partner in Botswana, UNDP was visible and respected, in part due to the organization’s participatory approach and strong relationship with the Government. Looking forward, there are several areas for intensifying UNDP support, such as capacity building and aid effectiveness. These need to be analysed in a holistic manner and a corporate strategy formulated.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The UNDP country programme should include a more realistic and adequate formulation of intended outcomes and respective indicators, and should be operationalized through annual action plans and accompanying budgets. Key programmes should sharpen their focus.
- A strategic review and possible revision of internal systems could cover areas such as the distribution of human resources between units, and the possibilities of stronger alignment of procedures with those of the Government. The policy for cost recovery should be revised so that it enables sustainable provision of services.
- UNDP should explore the possibilities of working more closely with civil society, including to play a watchdog role for service delivery.
- Financial monitoring and reporting should be strengthened. A specific monitoring and evaluation unit could be created, including to enhance alignment with government monitoring structures and mechanisms.
- All interventions supported by UNDP should be based on project documents that fulfil universally applied criteria of project cycle management. There should be an explicit strategy for sustainability in every project.
- All projects need to have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and decision-making structures, and these must be effectively communicated to all pertinent stakeholders.
- Future programme design should limit the number of cross-cutting issues to one or two, and have a clear strategy for ensuring that these are adequately addressed.
- UNDP should further strengthen gender equality and mainstreaming through assigning specific human resources. A clear strategy should be in place to ensure adequate attention to youth issues.
- Towards improved efficiency of the governance programme, UNDP could establish a senior-level management team that regularly reviews progress on implementation.
- The governance programme could benefit from regular reviews and documentation of good practices.
- Strengthening the linkages between National AIDS Coordinating Agency and subnational coordination structures is a potential area for UNDP work, drawing on experiences in other countries.

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Burkina Faso has been in a period of stability and social calm since 1991, which has allowed it to enter into a process of democratization and structural reforms. Set in a less than buoyant international and subregional context, the country’s economic activity has remained fairly dynamic. Yet poverty is increasing particularly in rural areas, where nearly 50 percent of the population lives under the poverty line.

The UNDP programme in Burkina Faso was organized around the fight against poverty and the sustainable management of natural resources, support for good governance and support for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2008.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2008: $78.6 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010**

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**PROGRAMME BUDGET BY OUTCOME AREA, 2006-2010 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
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<th>Outcome Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS control</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support to improving good governance</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction and natural resource sustainable management</td>
<td>17</td>
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**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The evaluation found that certain activities were widely recognized as comparative UNDP strengths. These included programmes in the areas of good governance, support for Parliament and support for the decentralization process initiated by the Government. UNDP advocacy effective assisted the parliamentary gender caucus, backing the approval of a new law to ensure that 30 percent of electoral candidates are women.

On addressing HIV/AIDS, the programme for supporting groups and communities (PAMAC) remains an essential part of the national strategy. PAMAC is managed as a coordinated multidonor common basket fund, and supports several groups carrying out HIV screenings, community care for victims and prevention through information. The Coalition of Burkinabe Groups and Networks Fighting against AIDS (CORAB), a new national network, has capacity for becoming a coordination instrument carrying out certain PAMAC functions.

Linking poverty and natural resource management interventions recognized that natural resources support the livelihoods of two-thirds of the population. Innovative programmes included introducing multifunctional platforms, the production and commercialization of non-wood forest products, and supporting national access to the carbon market under the Kyoto Protocol. UNDP has made noticeable progress in gender mainstreaming in the past two years, particularly through a systematic review of all current projects and strengthening capacities at all levels to include gender in interventions.

In general, there was a good balance between downstream and upstream activities. UNDP took on too many activities, however, given its limited resources. This perception harms its image. There are at least two examples of activities—the project to support local police and the project to support employment and professional training—that were considered nearly outside UNDP’s mandate and skills. UNDP could benefit from a more efficient concentration of financial and human resources in key areas where the advantages of the institution are recognized. More rigour could be applied in bringing activities in line with management capacities and human resources, as the organization may otherwise face important losses in terms of impact and resources.

While certain interventions should continue upstream, centrally and nationally, a greater geographical concentration of downstream activities could create new synergies between projects, creating economies of scale and allowing for improved monitoring. Targeting socio-economic categories is fundamental. Among UNDP programmes a number of initiatives were intended to bring assistance to the most deprived strata of society. But certain projects were not well conceived to achieve this goal. The microfinance project, for example, had credit conditions that might exclude the poorest groups.
The Government has taken an aid management approach based on the principles of the Paris Declaration. While UNDP subscribes to these principles, operating methods and procedures are not yet in line with them. An important step was taken when the UNDP Executive Board instituted a pilot period for prudent participation in “common baskets” or “common funds.” The largest share of aid in the country is still spent on projects, however. Numerous parallel implementation units exist, and UNDP generally requires reports in line with its own procedures and timetable. The rigid and cumbersome nature of institutional procedures continues to hamper efforts to explore new operating methods.

There are numerous coordination mechanisms in Burkina Faso, some of which are redundant. UN thematic groups have their equivalent within consultation frameworks bringing together all partners. This is also the case with sectoral dialogue frameworks implemented by the Government. There is room for rationalization, and for financial and human resource savings. Similarly, UNDP strategic documents largely repeat certain elements of the Government’s UN strategic frameworks, warranting a review for added value.

One significant contribution made by UNDP was to develop innovative strategies. The multifunctional platforms and PAMAC, for example, have served as models for a number of other interventions, and have attracted significant financing. These successes may mean that UNDP, over the long term, will become a marginal actor in larger scale implementation, but they do underline UNDP’s potential as a catalyst for innovation.

With public aid to development increasingly dispensed as direct budgetary assistance, financial resources given to international organizations may decline. This reality calls upon UNDP to support national development by making more judicious use of its resources, and by reinforcing activities in the areas of advice, support and advocacy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should accelerate alignment with the principles of the Paris Declaration at a central, institutional level.
- The programme in Burkina Faso has demonstrated its capacity for innovation and for catalysing significant institutional change; it could become a testing ground for such changes within UNDP as a whole.
- UNDP should place a high priority on supporting Government efforts to strengthen aid management capacities.
- UNDP should continue to actively contribute towards the “Common Country Assistance Strategy.”
- The participation of UNDP in UN thematic groups should be reassessed to avoid duplication.
- At the central, institutional level, UNDP should recognize the common strategic documents jointly established by technical and financial partners as a basis to elaborate Country Programme documents.
- The next country programme should be more selective on interventions, taking into account the comparative advantages of UNDP, its mandate, and its financial and human resources.
- UNDP should adopt the principle of geographical concentration of activities on the ground.
- Strengthened advisory functions and advocacy should be principal means of influencing development choices.
- UNDP should continue to emphasize innovative activities that have potential for attracting additional financing.
- On HIV/AIDS, UNDP should continue supporting the PAMAC, but also strengthen CORAB’s capabilities.
- On energy and poverty, the introduction of a new generation of multifunctional platforms could aim to improve profitability, adopt greener production methods and clarify ownership questions.
- UNDP should take a number of actions on gender, including to create a task force for monitoring systematic integration of gender in its activities, and to strengthen its collaboration with civil society.
- UNDP should advocate a legislative framework on the prevention of and response to natural disasters.
- Project design should be improved, especially in terms of the definition of results, monitoring and evaluation, and the systematic identification of exit strategies and strategies for the sustainability of results.
- Activities related to capacity development should be analysed in depth to ensure proper correspondence to global institutional practices and a more coherent approach across all programmes.
- UNDP should be more involved with direct monitoring of projects and should make more regular field visits.
- Increased partnership with universities and other recognized experts could contribute to reaffirming intellectual leadership in the area of development.

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Cameroon has shown resilience despite economic stagnation, and security and humanitarian crises. But economic growth remains below national targets, prompting a three-year emergency acceleration plan. Poverty has declined only marginally overall, and has increased in rural areas and some regions, resulting in widening inequalities.

UNDP has supported poverty reduction, gender equality, improved governance, better environmental resource management, and greater resilience, including to climate change and natural disaster. Since the most recent programme cycle began in 2013, there has been a growing emphasis on improving participation and access to essential services among vulnerable groups, particularly in the crisis-affected north of the country. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered work from 2008 through mid-2016.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2015: $40.7 MILLION

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2008-2015**

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<td>Regular resources</td>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2008-2015 ($ MILLIONS)**

- Crisis prevention and response: $4 million
- Environment and climate change: $5 million
- Governance (inclusion): $6 million
- Governance (institutions): $11 million
- Poverty reduction and basic socioeconomic services: $16 million

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP actions aligned with Cameroon’s development priorities, and contributed to national strategies and tools. Institutional capacities were strengthened, including at national commissions for elections, anti-corruption and human rights. At the local level, some communities have increased their income and strengthened their resilience to erratic climate conditions, including through a communal services model that uses service centres in local town halls to mobilize partnerships for local economic development.

Most of the results of UNDP support remain relatively intangible, however. Progress in the political participation of social groups in situations of vulnerability has been marginal. Implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy is still a challenge; specialized cells have been set up in some ministries, but without budgets, for instance. The programme to improve public services supported the development and validation of a quality standard, but this has not yet been disseminated. Disaster response plans have been drawn up in only two municipalities. Pilot experiments risk becoming a goal in themselves, whereas their purpose was to demonstrate results for replication on a larger scale.

While UNDP is perceived as defending values relating to gender issues and the concerns of vulnerable groups, it is also seen as just another donor, judged on the funding it provides. It has not adequately countered this perception and lacks visibility in the development landscape, despite efforts to sharpen its comparative advantages. Most interventions were not maintained across programme cycles, although it was a judicious choice to target the poorest regions in the north starting in 2013. New rapid response interventions were extended to communities most affected by conflict.

UNDP helped establish a committee on gender equality in the National Assembly and backed a process leading to a doubling in the share of women-held parliamentary seats, to over 30 percent in the 2013 elections. Programmes have sought to improve the integration of the concerns of women and other vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities in development policies and strategies. In time, these could produce transformative results. But even though gender dimensions and other types of vulnerability are integrated into almost all programme and project documents, in practice, programmes have not always taken these into account. For example, women were consulted on a communication strategy on adapting to climate change, but it did not include the communication channels they use.

Overall, limited resources have hindered programme
results. UNDP depends heavily on a few funding sources that are under increasing pressure, for reasons that include Cameroon being a middle-income country less attractive to traditional international donors. Government commitments, expected to reach one-third of resources for 2013 to 2017, remained at less than 1 percent from 2013 to 2015. Amid these shortfalls, a resource mobilization strategy has yet to show any notable effects, while resources that are available are not efficiently used. Work has been characterized by very long preparation phases, and delays in signing off annual work plans. Operating expenses for the main interventions since 2013 represent almost half of total spending. UNDP programme managers devote a disproportionate amount of time to management tasks, rather than to substantive work and the development of strategic partnerships.

UNDP has made much progress in monitoring and evaluation, particularly since 2013. Detailed monitoring features regular updates covering risks and problems, and the application of quality criteria. Yet it mainly focuses on implementation and budgets, and not on progress towards outcomes. In the field, monitoring is inadequate. Particularly in a context of armed conflict and uncertainty, where the situation is constantly evolving, careful monitoring is imperative to ensure relevance and inclusive programming.

The situation in Cameroon continues to be a challenging one, with its complex mix of declining resources, deepening inequalities and conflict-related instability. UNDP has moved to reorient its response, but could go much further in grounding programmes in a clearly defined notion of its comparative advantage. A more rigorous rationalization of costs could accompany scaled-up efforts to mobilize new and existing funding options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should concentrate more on results, strengthen its strategic positioning and cultivate its image. To achieve this, it should identify a limited number of areas where, as a result of its mandate or its experience, it has comparative advantages. It should then define ambitious and realistic outcomes and design and implement interventions, while at the same time achieving a good balance between targeted actions that are likely to rapidly produce concrete results, and interventions that address deeper problems. It must communicate on its positioning and its role.

- UNDP must consider the possibility of investing again in the subjects that have been identified as the greatest challenges facing the country and where, as a result of its neutrality as well as its experience internationally and in Cameroon, it has a comparative advantage: strengthening democratic processes and the rule of law.

- UNDP should continue to concentrate its efforts on the poorest and most vulnerable municipalities in the country, while striking a balance between upstream interventions (of a political or strategic nature) and downstream work (with target populations). It should not limit itself to the role of an agency executing rapid recovery projects.

- UNDP should continue to work to reduce gender inequalities and promote female empowerment, as well as the reduction of other forms of inequality and exclusion. The participation of vulnerable groups and the taking into account of their priorities must be integrated into all programmes. A separate programme addressing cross-cutting issues is not recommended. The country office must strengthen its gender expertise and strive to satisfy the reference criteria of the (UNDP’s) Gender Equality Seal.

- UNDP should update its partnership and resource mobilization strategy. It should also strengthen its advocacy with the Government in order to increase the national contribution to the country programme, reminding the government that the 2013-2017 Country Programme Action Plan pledges to match the contribution of UNDP; if this is not possible, it should clearly outline what UNDP can and cannot finance. At the same time, UNDP should take measures to improve its efficiency and direct its resources towards priority programme activities.

- UNDP should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation activities, placing the accent on the changes caused by these activities, as well as on the progress made in achieving the expected outcomes. UNDP should also structure its office according to the geographic concentration of its programming, allocating more staff to the Far North to strengthen coordination and monitoring.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Côte d’Ivoire has experienced severe political instability since a coup in 1999, followed by civil war. While the situation has improved, work towards national reconciliation and security continues. Long economic deterioration and isolation have worsened poverty rates; unemployment and food insecurity are persistently high.

UNDP’s programme in Côte d’Ivoire has focused on poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including in strengthening the HIV/AIDS response as well as sustainable environmental management. A second emphasis has been governance, namely, reinforcement of public administration and local governance, the promotion of the private sector, peacebuilding and crisis prevention. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2013.

UNDP demonstrated a great capacity to adapt during the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. Development interventions have been consistently aligned to evolving national priorities, including new efforts to fight poverty, crisis prevention and recovery, and governance initiatives. Successes are largely due to support provided to central and local governments in terms of frameworks and policy tools, which guided poverty reduction and national development planning as well as sectoral advances in areas including HIV/AIDS, employment and education.

In the fight against poverty and to achieve the MDGs, the most significant results came from the school meal programme, where school canteens were set up in food insecure areas. Tangible improvements resulted in food security (especially among children and, indirectly, parents) and school enrolment, especially for girls. This initiative, rightly regarded as a ‘good practice’, has attracted the interest of other countries in the region; Togo has implemented a similar model.

The strategy for income-generating activities was not always effective. Results were mostly positive for projects that focused on women and women’s groups, but less convincing for the reintegration of former combatants. The absence of a holistic approach, the use of overly flexible criteria in the selection of beneficiaries and implementation partners, and the modest level of funding awarded to these projects, which tended to maintain a culture of dependency, sometimes compromised sustainability.

Work on environmental protection resulted in some policy updates, such as on integrated water resources management, but implementation was hindered by resource constraints. Programmes also stopped short of tackling urgent structural problems such as land tenure issues and relationships with neighbouring countries.

A notable governance achievement was the successful organization of the 2010 presidential elections, despite a difficult context. This built on UNDP technical support to the Independent Electoral Commission and its assistance with an enduring dialogue between political parties and civil society. Difficulties were encountered with some donors on the management of funds for the electoral process, on reporting, and on administrative inefficiencies caused by factors beyond the control of the country office, such as changes in the dates of the elections. Another important step was UNDP’s leadership in launching a process of decentralization in 2006 that has led to legislation devolving power to local authorities.

In crisis prevention and recovery, interventions to rehabilitate infrastructure, expand access to basic social services and provide income-generating activities improved living conditions and safety in communities. They restored an atmosphere of trust and strengthened social cohesion, especially in the west, where a sense of abandonment was felt after humanitarian organizations
The resurgence of conflicts in some regions, however, has threatened and sometimes even destroyed achievements related to infrastructure and the resettlement of internally displaced persons.

A gender policy ensured that gender issues were considered in all UNDP programmes and projects. But further efforts are required in terms of the participation of women in the country’s decision-making and representation processes and bodies. Efforts to increase awareness on human rights have led to the creation of an entity responsible for human rights, but more needs to be done to prevent and punish human rights violations.

An outreach strategy adopted by UNDP from 2008 as a response to the crisis involved opening local field offices throughout the country. This was one of its most effective innovations, optimizing value for money. Involving local partners in project implementation and even monitoring increased efficiency, and helped achieve expected outcomes without generating additional costs. The strategy allowed activities to continue despite an uncertain and unpredictable environment. But some duplication and redundancy occurred, and the scope of activities remained modest compared to needs.

UNDP played an important role in the coordination of aid, yet strategic coordination was essentially non-existent among UN entities, and the search for synergies and partnerships in the field had mixed results.

A strategy for mobilizing resources during the period of crisis drew heavily on in-country donors and was effective at that time. Yet international aid now seems to be shifting towards direct budgetary support for the Government. The unpredictability of resources hinders effective programme planning and threatens sustainability. Without a systematic resource mobilization plan in place, the search for funds may occur at the expense of strategic advisory activities.

Throughout a protracted political crisis, UNDP was virtually the sole development partner remaining in Côte d’Ivoire. As Côte d’Ivoire moves towards recovery, the Country Office should assess its strengths and comparative advantages. By using its network of expertise and its position as a neutral multilateral agency, it is well placed to initiate national dialogue on fundamental issues such as job creation, the reform of government and public institutions, and social cohesion, among other issues. It can seek strategic interventions and use limited resources as a catalyst, coupled with advocacy for other development partners to replicate successful initiatives on a larger scale.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Support the Ivorian Government to ensure its transition towards development.
- Maintain a focus on well-defined areas of concentration, making the most of UNDP strengths, focusing on budget-friendly activities at the strategic level and activities at the operational level, and using resources in a catalytic manner.
- Pay greater attention to the management of natural resources and environmental protection.
- Play a more proactive role in coordinating aid, including by establishing a proper collaboration strategy with all UN agencies, with a joint action plan should another crisis arise. UNDP should play an intermediary role between the Government and all of its financial partners to ensure that aid is coordinated efficiently, and that better distribution and complementarity in the roles of each partner occur.
- Rethink the strategy for mobilizing resources so that it becomes an integral part of planning activities, and more predictable and less time consuming for the programme, to the detriment of more strategic activities.
- Take advantage of the transformative potential of the crisis so that UNDP can address the needs of communities, while also considering aspects of gender.
- Rethink the intervention strategy in the field. Choose a limited number of pilot interventions and adopt a holistic approach, based on preliminary studies and rigorous criteria for the choice of projects, service providers and beneficiaries, to produce lasting results, focusing on quality over quantity.
- Ensure greater visibility, including through a communication policy covering all programme stages.
- Pay more attention to ensuring that actions have lasting effects.
- Improve the functioning of operations in order to relieve the impact of bureaucracy and address the delays in disbursement of funds.

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After a long dictatorship and two devastating wars, the Democratic Republic of the Congo embarked in 2003 on a transition that led to its first democratic elections since 1960. But it remains among the poorest countries in the world. In the east, continued violence is committed by armed groups.

UNDP has provided support to good governance, the fight against poverty, and crisis prevention and recovery. Additional activities reflected evolving opportunities related to the sustainable management of natural resources, and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other pandemics. Starting in 2008, the country programme positioned UNDP as working towards peace and security through the strengthening of good governance and poverty reduction. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2012.

UNDP’s achievements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo included assuming a leading role in the demobilization of ex-combatants, sometimes in extremely difficult conditions, thus making a significant contribution to peace and stability. It supported the transitional Parliament in drafting the new Constitution and election laws, and helped register over 25 million voters and organize three elections within a year. The National Forum on Decentralization, held at the end of 2007, defined the conceptual approach in this field.

In the fight against poverty and support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UNDP saw achievements in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and community recovery; the drafting of pro-poor strategies and policies; the extension of microfinance and climate change. Support for the elaboration of the REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) Preparedness Plan opened the way for nearly $75 million in new funding in 2010.

In some areas, UNDP achieved few concrete results. It did not influence national mechanisms and public policies to promote human rights and especially gender equality, for example. More effective support to decentralization, and strengthening local authorities and civil society organizations could have accelerated democratization and peacebuilding. Capacity-building focused narrowly on training a few individuals without looking at operational constraints of institutions. One exception was work with the Court of Audits, a watchdog for the management of public finance. Following intensive consultations, the Government and active partners in public finance reform, including UNDP, developed a strategic plan for finance reform as a common framework for the Court and all actors in the field. By 2010, the Court was able to publish all required reports.

National ownership of results was limited for governmental units but better for community projects. Benefiting communities often contributed financially or provided labour to each intervention that concerned them, while the State repeatedly failed to allocate a budget and assign the personnel required to operate a rehabilitated service. The electoral process was a significant exception, as the Government was expected to contribute more than 66 percent of financing during the 2011 cycle.

In the second half of the period evaluated, donors began phasing out short-term emergency interventions and switching to long-term development assistance. UNDP formulated an ambitious programme to fight poverty and achieve the MDGs, but sufficient funding...
never materialized, for reasons including donor concerns about a precarious context and the global financial crisis. In recent years, activities related to the management of two major basket funds, the Humanitarian Pooled Fund and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, have come to represent 61 percent of total outlays.

Through the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, the country office strengthened the management skills of humanitarian NGOs. But 300 humanitarian projects were considered UNDP projects from an administrative point of view. Under the Global Fund, UNDP’s role has been substantive, but its performance assessment has been downgraded, resulting from poor monitoring, complex operational structures, and procedures that do not adequately take into account the operational context.

A sudden increase in resources in 2005 and 2006 required a rapid adaptation of the country office, with massive hiring, intensive use of United Nations Volunteers and the creation of many ad hoc structures and units. The organization was subsequently not quick enough to ‘normalize’ this situation. Seven field offices created in 2007 brought the organization closer to local authorities and beneficiaries, and boosted UNDP’s credibility, but were expensive. In 2011, UNDP reduced its local presence, noting that persistent funding shortfalls required the reorientation of a programme initially built around community recovery.

In general, UNDP interventions have addressed key themes for the country’s future and the welfare of its population. The overall programme, however, suffered from several imbalances, including the large share of operations now dedicated to managing basket funds. This raises an important issue around the external perception of UNDP, which may increasingly be seen as less of an organization providing visible leadership for development and as more of a service provider in domains not always central to its mandate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• In planning for the next cycle, and considering a probable reduction in resources, UNDP must strive to reduce the number of sectors and subsectors of intervention, build upon the strongest elements of its former programmes to address the country’s most urgent needs, and avoid redundancy with other stakeholders’ interventions.
• Building on its comparative advantages as government partner, leading UN agency and Country Assistance Framework member, UNDP must reposition itself as a facilitator of change by developing strong advocacy and national debates on complex issues crucial to the country’s development.
• The next programme must identify clear, quantifiable objectives to move towards compliance with the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, building upon the principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations, and keeping in mind that national ownership without national co-funding remains rather theoretical.
• UNDP must redefine its approach to capacity-building of national institutions on the basis of internationally recognized good practices and in close coordination with other international partners active in this field.
• The country office should implement its gender strategy and correct the imbalance between men and women professional staff.
• While recognizing that a reduction in field office staff is inevitable, this kind of decision cannot solely answer to immediate financial considerations, but must also take into account UNDP’s positioning as a privileged interlocutor for local authorities, its proximity to the poor it must serve as a priority, as well as future financing opportunities, for example, those that should ultimately result from the REDD+ or Peace Consolidation Programme process.
• The country office must strengthen its partnerships and improve its efficiency by working on its institutional culture, which is too bureaucratic and fragmented.
• At both the headquarters and country level, UNDP must improve its basket funds management skills and, to this end, reconsider some of the issues related to the management of these funds.
• The UNDP country office must reorganize its monitoring and evaluation resources to provide for better synergy among M&E staff and greater independence of the evaluation function.

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As the third-largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, Equatorial Guinea has experienced periods of high economic growth that have transformed it into an upper-middle-income country. But favourable macroeconomic indicators and a medium level of human development coexist with highly unequal development, between the capital and the continental territory, and rural and urban areas.

UNDP has oriented its support around socioeconomic well-being, with an emphasis on vulnerable populations; democratic governance, including to bolster public administration capacities; and the environment and sustainability, focusing on the legislative and institutional framework. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP’s 2013–2017 programme cycle, also taking into account major interventions begun during the previous 2008–2012 cycle.

Equatorial Guinea must tackle significant levels of poverty and inequality, and faces a critical need to formulate and implement holistic development policies. In this context, UNDP has contended with its own challenges, particularly limited resources. Equatorial Guinea is now classified as an upper-middle or high-income country, with fewer contributions from traditional donors.

One success, with UNDP support, was the approval of an administrative reform programme and review of the Law on the Judicial Regime of the Central State Administration. This marked a major step towards defining and reorienting the roles of the central and peripheral administrations. With the creation of the National Statistics Institute, the country now has a national system that provides data to develop and monitor public policies.

An initiative on youth employment has fostered their inclusion in a new economy, including through setting up ICT training centres. Two thousand underprivileged youth have gone through the centres so far; China is now helping to replicate them. A study trip to Rwanda for centre heads helped guide an orientation towards accompanying youth as they enter the labour market.

Another advance was the unification of ministries responsible for managing the environment and protected areas, and the launch of the National Institute for the Environment. A framework document was drawn up for joint public–private participation in carbon monitoring in protected areas. The zones of each area have been mapped and catalogues of natural resources prepared, along with measures to protect them. All these tasks are preparatory, however, given serious problems in protected areas, such as the Monte Alen reserve. Described as the country’s most important park, it is in a state of neglect.

On balance, UNDP’s contributions were medium to high in relevance, medium in efficiency, and low in effectiveness and sustainability. Unfortunately, in addition to resource constraints, the organization seemed to address problems reactively, through unstructured national requests. Interventions mainly focused on activities and outputs, not on obtaining true development results aimed at promoting changes that improve people’s quality of life and the environment. An unequal distribution of interventions occurred between Malabo, the main urban nucleus, and the rest of the country. This was a particular concern for the continental zone, home to many of those most in need of actions from UNDP.

Many valuable technical skills trainings took place, but without a specific purpose, resulting in efforts that in the end lacked substantial impact. Staff in public bodies improved their knowledge on promoting and protecting human rights and gender equality, for example, but do not have the mechanisms to carry out their functions or report on the monitoring of international commitments. Training courses on municipal management accompa-
nied the provision of office equipment to some of the more underprivileged municipal entities. But competencies were not sufficiently transferred to enable local authorities to help their populations.

Significant interventions in terms of financial resources were limited to procuring goods and services, without suitable strategies to develop national capacities. The provision of pharmaceutical products as part of the fight against HIV ran up against weak monitoring, for instance, and limited control over the way supplies were received on the ground.

Well recognized for representing United Nations values, UNDP kept up a good partnership with the Government and maintained a positive, credible image. Nevertheless, the organization is sometimes perceived as being too close to the public administration, which implied a risk to its credibility, impartiality and neutrality. Few actors were involved in designing and implementing interventions. A lack of groups representing beneficiaries and from civil society was particularly notable. Greater inclusion of development actors throughout the country could better respond appropriately to real needs.

Recent advances in UN inter-agency coordination were insufficient, with staff assigned ad hoc to drafting the new United Nations Development Assistance Frame-

work (UNDAF). There has not been progress in implementing inter-agency joint programmes, even when the UNDAF framework of results and resources identified various agencies to work on common outcomes.

Instability from high staff turnover rates in counterpart public institutions and at UNDP were some of the critical factors undercutting sustainability and effectiveness. In general, UNDP lacked the capacity to lead the design and formulation of quality projects, and practice results-based management. While staff numbers matched the existing level of programme implementation, a greater response would require at least one additional programme official and more administrative support. Talent retention has been affected by the lack of competitiveness in the current salary scale compared to what is offered in the national private sector.

UNDP has strong credibility in Equatorial Guinea, but achieving its objectives requires public policies and strategies that address real transformation systematically. Known as a leader sustainable human development, UNDP was not in a position to influence policies effectively and sustainably, for reasons that include a lack of national platforms and its own limited operational footprint. Its positioning has great potential for growth, but only with a suitable context and resources.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Moving into the next programming cycle, reduce the number of thematic areas of work and focus on two thematic areas—Poverty and Environment (by merging them together) and Promoting Democratic Governance with gender and human rights focus cutting across both themes. Further it should Establish a comprehensive communications strategy to improve UNDP’s image highlighting its potential and added value.
- Ensure greater programmatic presence outside the island of Bioko and build synergies and join forces with other UN system agencies in their fight against poverty and inequality, and environmental issues in the continental and rural areas of the country.
- Make interagency coordination more effective in terms of the quality and quantity of interventions, inspiring collaboration among UN system agencies to promote coordinated capitalization of achievements and project a stronger, unified voice on relevant issues for greater impact and efficiency gains.
- UNDP should only implement the projects and activities for which appropriate conditions exist to make contributions in terms of development results, and have a high probability of having an impact in terms of real, tangible changes in the main development challenges at national level (promotion and guarantee of human rights, environmental sustainability, economic promotion / diversification, fight against corruption, promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals and youth employment.
- UNDP should reflect on its role in the country and revise its cooperation strategies and modalities with the Government so that it can creatively include other development actors and civil society in the country to consolidate interventions for lasting impact. If this does not occur, the organization will have to reflect upon and decide the reach of its supported actions in the country, defining strategies which limit its presence to occasional interventions and the provision of the essential, basic services that are normally provided by UNDP in support of the UN system.

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Ethiopia’s endemic poverty is linked to rapid rates of population growth, severe soil erosion, war, internal conflict, drought, famine and HIV/AIDS. Increasing numbers of people are dependent on food relief. A few positive signs suggest opportunities for progress, including a less centralized government that is more open to partnerships for development, higher rates of school enrolment, scattered improvements in public service delivery, and a stronger public workforce than elsewhere in the region. Ethiopia now has a fairly ‘pro-poor’ national policy framework. One sign of resilience is the country’s capacity in recent droughts to distribute food and supplies to the needy.

UNDP has been an active partner in different initiatives aimed at nation-building, democratic development and the shift from a command to a market economy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2006.

UNDP holds a critical position in the overall architecture for coordination and liaison between the Government and external partners, by virtue of being a co-chair of the Development Assistance Group (DAG), by chairing the DAG core group tasked with consultations pertaining to the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and through its active involvement in a number of technical and sector working groups.

Widely recognized and appreciated by government and donor stakeholders alike, UNDP can claim some credit for an improved atmosphere and working arrangements in terms of strengthened external cooperation and increased official development assistance (ODA) flows. One factor that allowed UNDP a central place in coordination efforts was the perception that the organization had not ‘abandoned’ the country during the 1998–2000 conflict with Eritrea. At the same time, UNDP enabled the donor community to achieve a high degree of impact through joint action by providing secretariat services and facilities for pooling support.

Of particular importance was the SDPRP formulation. Local, regional and federal consultations organized by UNDP included a range of stakeholders, such as local representatives, non-governmental organizations, community-based organization, religious leaders, members of the private sector, high-level government officials and DAG observers. Donors facilitated communication and addressed issues such as lowering the administrative and transaction costs of ODA.

During the most recent drought, one positive aspect was that the Government and the donor community were able to signal the approaching humanitarian crisis as soon as its potential dimensions became evident. An early response concentrated on the provision of food, water, health and nutrition services, veterinary services and seeds to support second and third plantings of short-cycle crops. UNDP played a major part in establishing the New Coalition for Food Security to find a lasting solution to food insecurity, bridging the gap between emergency, recovery and longer-term development.

Another achievement entailed support for the Water Sector Development Plan, which contains a set of programmes for the sustainable use and management of water resources. UNDP also focused on institutional capacity building for participatory watershed planning and management.

Encouraged by UNDP advocacy, the Government established an Ombudsman Panel and a Human Rights Commission. Preparatory work for civil service reform...
contributed to decentralization, capacity-building and budget reform.

UNDP has formed numerous partnerships with the World Bank and bilateral donors for building capacity at various levels of government and in a variety of sub-sectors. Many donors have expressed interest in these activities, and the Government has invited UNDP to take the lead in order to avoid piecemeal approaches that could introduce incompatible systems. The ‘value added’ UNDP gave donors through coordinating and in some cases executing projects comprised coherence, transparency and a common and politically neutral platform.

A weakness in UNDP’s approach was poor ‘micro-macro’ linkages, where downstream operations were implemented in isolation from complementary reforms in the ‘upstream’ enabling policy environment. Some ‘pilot’ initiatives and ‘innovative’ schemes did not clearly dovetail with the national policy frameworks that UNDP itself helped establish. This concern did not apply to all programme areas. There were very encouraging examples of using UNDP’s status at the macro-level to give strength to policy work at the sector or micro-level in governance, food security and HIV/AIDS.

It was not clear that UNDP’s corporate results-based management tools have led to improved focus or cohesion, or increased effectiveness. UNDP will need to find a way to focus its efforts on objectives that are operationally attainable, and further reduce the number of different project areas, which remains unwieldy in spite of commendable efforts to narrow programme focus.

An important lesson from the organization’s coordination role was that the volume of funds was not the paramount determinant of success. Credibility, trust and leverage as a broker within a diverse constituency of interests can only be earned; they cannot be bought. Success is built on commitment and diplomatic skill. But perhaps above all, it requires substantive depth. Stakeholders with particular interests and technical expertise will only let themselves be coordinated by someone who is perceived to be on top of the substantive issues.

Ethiopia today enjoys good prospects. UNDP has played an important role in laying the foundation for the current optimism. The organization itself will now need to move on, both in terms of the substantive priorities of its work as well as in the way it conducts its operations. If fruitful policy dialogue with domestic and external stakeholders continues and solidifies, the Government will have an opportunity to enhance the credibility of its development agenda and add resources to its programming for development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In time, UNDP will need to leave an increasing share of its coordination role to the Government, and find another, equally fruitful, role for itself. Capacity development is a critical area for UNDP engagement.
- UNDP should not be enticed by opportunities that might exist for implementing ‘bulk’ skills and procurement projects, as they are based on parallel structures and may undermine capacities emerging from within national institutions. UNDP should bring a strategic focus that goes beyond the existence of policy dialogue towards the substantive content of policy.
- UNDP should critically examine the range of arenas to which it can bring the highest relative added value to Ethiopia’s development. A national human development report could be a meaningful vehicle for advocacy pertaining to substantive areas of reform.
- As ODA flows increase, it is imperative that UNDP should maintain and further refine its strategic thrust rather than risk dissipation of its focus through convenient short-term opportunities for resource mobilization.
- In terms of operational management, UNDP is strongly advised to look for more flexible modes of delivery, even with regard to technical cooperation inputs.
- A number of donors are currently trying to elaborate forms of budget support that may be effective in some sectors in Ethiopia. As a technical cooperation agency, UNDP has some problems providing budget support that is financial rather than in the form of technical assistance. But it would be possible for UNDP to provide blanket support for local expenditure on programmes that national authorities have a demonstrated ability to manage. In a situation of acute capacity constraints on the use of official development assistance, such solutions are infinitely better than trying to speed-up disbursement under nationally executed projects by letting the country office take over their execution.
Ethiopia has seen notable political institution-building and democratic reforms in recent decades. Public sector-led economic growth, averaging about 11 per cent per year over the last 10 years, is remarkable. But the country continues to face enormous challenges to human development, with the absolute number of poor people remaining the same over the last 15 years despite a fall in the poverty rate.

UNDP has provided policy support and institutional capacity development in the areas of sustainable economic development, climate-resilient green growth, and democratic governance and capacity development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2012 to 2015.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2012-2014: $118.7 MILLION**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Founding Sources, 2012-2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
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<td>Programme government</td>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2012-2014 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable economic development</th>
<th>Climate, risk and resilience</th>
<th>Democratic governance/capacity development</th>
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<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, UNDP-backed interventions had a high level of government ownership. UNDP leveraged this close relationship to navigate sensitive policy issues from a human development perspective. Interventions fully aligned with national and sectoral development plans and policies, and were largely relevant to local communities.

Capacity development measures supported new institutions at the federal level, including the National Electoral Board, the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission, and the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. Capacities were enlarged in the ministries of agriculture, water, irrigation and energy, and industry, and at some subnational institutions, such as bureaus of finance and economic development. This approach enhanced national ownership, which may partly sustain programme results. But the evaluation found that other elements of sustainability need improvement. Exit strategies, for instance, need to be clearly defined to enhance a smooth transition.

Under the sustainable economic development portfolio, upstream policy and institutional support actions were complemented by local institutional development and strengthening, as well as projects supporting the livelihoods of local people. In agriculture, interventions contributed to improved services, marketing, and agricultural technologies and practices that appear to have brought tangible improvements to agricultural production and productivity among smallholder farmers. While UNDP cannot be credited for detailed field results achieved by the Agricultural Transformation Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture, catalytic resources, technical support and capacity-building provided to these institutions allowed them to achieve important results.

In the industrial sector, UNDP-supported projects were effective in building government capacity and creating strong support institutions, but much more needs to be done to transform these capacities into stronger growth among small and medium enterprises. The Entrepreneurship Development Programme, which incorporated some of the goals of an earlier local economic development project, has played a catalytic role in encouraging women and young entrepreneurs, with promising initial results in terms of increased income. The scale was limited, however, with only 10 percent of the training target achieved at the time of the evaluation. Reasons for this included budgetary shortfalls.

With UNDP’s assistance, Ethiopia now has a climate-resilient green energy strategy and a complementary supportive financial facility. Implementing institutions have gained equipment and trained personnel. UNDP has played an equally significant role in disaster risk management, with progress made in the development of policies, strategies and capacities, including a national Disaster Risk Management Strategy Programme and Investment Framework. More coordination is required, however, to fill gaps in mainstreaming climate change.
and environmental issues in planning, investment and development programmes.

Democratic governance programmes made adequate contributions to policy changes and government institutional capacities resulting in tangible advances in human rights, anti-corruption measures, elections and auditing. The 2013 National Human Rights Action Plan demonstrated strong national ownership and a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the promotion and protection of human rights. Although most UNDP-supported projects incorporated some gender concerns and supported greater women's participation, much more needs to be done in mainstreaming gender across programmes.

While most UNDP programmes delivered satisfactorily at the output result level, specific contributions to outcome results were more difficult to assess. Links to changes in people's lives on the ground were not always evident. Theories of change were not clear enough. Only a few synergies were identified across programme units. Clear and deliberate protocols that show macro-micro linkages and assess the effectiveness of pilots for potential scale-up will increase the utility of lessons learned on the ground.

Strong internal management practices backed high programme implementation rates, but over-ambitious budget plans required continuous adjustments. UNDP played a key role in rolling out the Business Operations Strategy and other operations-focused initiatives that have demonstrated cost savings, such as a $2.6 million drop in procurement services costs in 2014.

UNDP's position of trust and neutrality has allowed it to act as an interlocutor between the Government and other development partners. A challenge has come in balancing partner expectations. Some donors maintain that UNDP should advocate for room for more diverse political parties. Some opportunities may come from the recognition of citizens' empowerment in national legislation. Moving forward, UNDP can further leverage its close relationship with the Government to discuss best practices in people's self-empowerment, underscoring how civil society engagement will ultimately enhance development effectiveness and sustainability.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- By building on its track record, and taking account of the Government's Growth and Transformation Plan II priorities, UNDP should continue to support institutional building and capacity development particularly in sustainable economic growth, democratic governance and climate-sensitive and resilient development. At the same time, continued attention to the private sector and community-level development will be necessary to support expected development outcomes. An explicit focus on resilience should be included.

- UNDP should maintain and use its strong relationship with the Government to engage in policy dialogue, but strengthen its sustainable human development perspectives. These are critical to meeting the needs of Ethiopia's people and are consistent with the UNDP Strategic Plan priorities and engagement principles.

- To enhance sustainability, UNDP should incorporate well-defined exit strategies into all its programmes and projects, as well as explicit learning. It should scale up strategies for pilot projects. This should be complemented by building synergies horizontally across programming units and vertically through clear articulation of macro-micro linkages between local projects, and upstream policy and institutional reform.

- UNDP should ensure the clear articulation and ownership of theories of change at the time of programme design by engaging key stakeholders. This should be complemented by appropriate outcomes indicators and baselines as part of systematic and more institutionalized approach to monitoring and evaluation. While UNDP should continue to strengthen its results-based management approach, it will have to be prepared to deal with natural hazard and socioeconomic shocks and stresses. This will require flexibility and adaptive management.

- More systematic participatory assessments of community assets and needs are required to better align UNDP’s projects to specific community priorities and at the same time ensure greater ownership and sustainability at that level and to nurture bottom-up processes of self-empowerment. Supporting bottom-up self-empowering engagement processes with communities will also increase communities’ voice and participation.

- UNDP should prioritize gender mainstreaming in the next country programme. The 2014 Gender Equality Strategy must be accompanied by an operational implementation framework with dedicated staff to ensure that necessary systems and structures are in place to contribute to gender transformative results.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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Gabon has been governed by the same political party since 1967. Drawing on oil resources, it has become an upper middle-income country, ranked by the International Monetary Fund as the third wealthiest nation in Africa. Progress towards many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was inadequate, however, with a notable exception being environmental sustainability.

From 2007 to 2011, UNDP supported efforts to reduce poverty and pursue the MDGs, promote good governance and control disease. Starting in 2012, it sought to help strengthen economic, democratic and environmental governance, and promote human well-being and increase the participation of all in growth. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2016.

UNDP made a number of strategic and operational contributions to development in Gabon. Work related to the environment led to improvements in the management framework and instruments. Following an institutional assessment carried out in the context of the Second Communication on Climate Change, the National Climate Council was set up, followed by specific plans and strategies for critical resources, including wetlands, coastal areas and land allocation.

Under the governance portfolio, global and sectoral strategies for steering the economy and general governance policies were developed. UNDP helped the Government adopt a National Good Governance Strategy and set up an executive secretariat to strengthen institutional governance, consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and clean-up public finances, among other aims.

For the first time, Gabon has a decentralization and devolution strategy, a tool valued by public stakeholders at the highest levels. It drew on unprecedented analysis and research supported by UNDP.

Capacities were built to orient policies in favour of the most deprived people, including through operationalizing and monitoring measures to achieve the MDGs. No strategic mainstreaming of human rights was observed, however. UNDP did contribute to the creation of a national gender policy, although questions remain around its implementation. It also supported projects encouraging a significant share of women participants. Women comprised 60 per cent of the 5,000 people who benefited from 14 community projects funded by the Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance (ARTGOLD) project, for example.

Programmes were generally relevant to national priorities and the development context, aligning with the country’s development priorities as set out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon. Despite general evidence of appropriate solutions, however, there were some areas of weakness. The household waste collection project in the less developed urban areas of major towns was inappropriate, for example, as it increased the wealth gap, making poorer populations pay for waste collection services that are free for residents of affluent town-centre neighbourhoods. ARTGOLD operated in the five wealthiest provinces, even though a pro-poor approach should be integral to all UNDP strategies.

Gabon’s categorization as an upper middle-income country affected the programme in a variety of ways. Sources of official development assistance have dried up, although needs have not, with significant gaps remaining, particularly in social services and infrastructure. UNDP had to find alternative funding to complement national budget support. In the programme cycle from 2007 to 2011, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) was the main donor. A series of grants greatly contributed to improving indicators for
the prevention and treatment of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. UNDP managed funds from Shell-Gabon to support the health department of Ndogou, where oil sites operated by this company are located. Work on the environment drew on resources from the Global Environment Fund (GEF).

Significant resources came from the Government to deliver projects in partnership with national counterparts. The Government was practically the only donor for governance work. The Anti-corruption and Anti-money Laundering Strategy was entirely state-funded, and although UNDP allocated resources to ARTGOLD, most funding came from the state budget. Some local governments allocated a portion of their investment budgets to the programme.

Although new funding sources were evidence of a degree of programme efficiency, the failure of some of them signaled an erosion in efficiency. UNDP lost GEF and Shell-Gabon funding in part because the added value of the programme frameworks was no longer meeting expectations. The achievements of the Global Fund have deteriorated, and the suspension of Gabon as a recipient of these funds was a clear sign that the strategic capacity that UNDP tried to establish was not sustained.

The high proportion of state funding for the programme hindered implementation through a degree of uncertainty, often arising around timing. Since the state budget is not operational until the end of the first quarter of every year, often state partnerships are implemented later than that. The ARTGOLD project almost had to recall field staff because state funding was delayed. The Project in Support of the National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment also experienced delays in getting off the ground. These interruptions have been exacerbated by a drop in oil revenues, which make up 50 percent of the state budget.

Increasingly, performance has become hindered by the slimming of UNDP operations, including a continuous depletion of staff capacity that has ultimately undermined programme value. After the GEF funding was transferred to the World Bank, two national counterparts, in the Environment Ministry and the Ministry for the Economy and Finance, suggested that this was due to a view that UNDP had lost technical capacity and could no longer offer sufficient responsiveness and initiative.

In sum, UNDP’s strategic positioning is adequate in terms of supporting governance, poverty reduction and natural resource management, areas where it offers acknowledged added value. In a country faced with problems of wealth distribution, UNDP could play a crucially important role in building the capacity of the Government to reach the most deprived more effectively. The current erosion of its technical capacity, however, requires a reassessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• In line with the development cooperation needs of Gabon as a middle-income country, UNDP should engage with the Government and civil society to reassess its country interventions for maximum impact.

• A loss of responsibility for the management of funds, including GEF and Shell-Gabon, has been due to the continuous depletion of technical capacity. UNDP should define new remits for cooperation and relevant staff profiles. Taking into account budget restrictions and the need to attract state funding more effectively, greater numbers of local staff can be recruited with the highest standards of skill and productivity.

• Given the limited (or non) impact of country programmes and recurrent failures in programme operations, UNDP should refocus its programmes at the strategic level, providing research, convening and capacity building support, and delegate the operational aspects to a national implementing agency supported by a UN agency with relevant expertise.

• To improve learning and programme delivery, UNDP should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems supported by an annual monitoring and evaluation plan with defined responsibilities and accountability for the function at the country office.

• State funding should be used as leverage for developing national capacity. UNDP needs to conduct a specific analysis of the capacity requirements of national partners, and systematically plan and implement relevant capacity-building, while involving partners in the financial management of projects.

• UNDP should build a more systematic approach to recovering funding relationships, with a regularly evaluated ad hoc plan and appropriate institutional communication, and buy-in from the whole office.

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The first country in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence, Ghana has made progress in the area of governance over the past 15 years. But it faces challenges from local conflicts and the proliferation of small arms, as well as the need for continued public sector reforms. Considered a country at a medium stage of human development, Ghana has made significant progress in the reduction of the share of people in extreme poverty, and on other elements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but gaps on some goals as well as large regional disparities persist.

UNDP has provided support on governance, poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievement, and environment and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

UNDP has made a substantial contribution towards Ghana’s development, and is highly valued as a partner willing to walk alongside the Government to achieve national development ambitions. Interventions targeted major challenges, including wealth creation and poverty reduction. Awareness of the concentration of problems in marginalized communities, by gender, and among vulnerable groups and deprived areas—in particular, Ghana’s North-South divide—contributed to political action in favour of decentralization and equitable development. One important achievement was the mainstreaming of the MDGs into the national planning system. Continuous advocacy coupled with downstream interventions contributed to this milestone.

UNDP helped establish new institutions and strengthen existing ones, notably the National Peace Council and the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms. Support was instrumental in devising national environment and energy policy frameworks and mainstreaming environmental issues into planning, backed by a consistent focus on developing capacity for implementing policies and plans. Work at the policy level was complemented by a valuable portfolio of activities at the grass-roots on issues such as sustainable land management, alternative energy and sustainable livelihoods.

Despite a sound track record upstream and downstream, UNDP faced a gap at the middle level in support to decentralization and local economic governance. Capacity development for local governments has not, so far, been central to the programme, although new initiatives are planned. Following the pilot preparation of three district Human Development Reports, it was not clear that these will provide a solid basis for planning or institutional strengthening at the district level.

UNDP has a strong partnership with the Government and is recognized for substantive policy contributions, but has not leveraged this privileged position sufficiently to enhance national ownership of the development agenda by a broader range of stakeholders. Partnership with civil society has changed over time. While a number of civil society organizations are involved in UNDP projects, the policy dialogue and advocacy once characteristic of UNDP’s engagement is no longer evident.

Partnerships with the private sector primarily involve international companies; UNDP does not engage them in policy discussions. Assistance helped the Private Enterprise Foundation in a dialogue with the Government on the Private Sector Development Strategy and the business regulatory environment, but the foundation has limited membership and representation.
A number of pilot initiatives, particularly in rural livelihoods and energy and a sustainable environment, proved promising. New spaces to test innovative solutions to development challenges included the Multi-Media Incubator Centre. The ambitious agenda of community-based interventions such as the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Programme and the Millennium Village Project provided scope for testing alternative approaches to development in the most deprived areas of the country.

But these pilot initiatives mostly reached a limited number of people for a relatively short time. Without an explicit strategy that includes measures for national ownership, capacity-building and lessons learned from pilot activities, the Government and other partners will not be able to expand and sustain these. Involvement of local governments may be a key element in addressing some issues of sustainability and coverage. Some project design flaws also need to be tackled, such as the limited or belated focus on income generation, cost recovery, micro- and small business growth, and access to markets.

Inefficient and ineffective business processes could undermine the achievements of UNDP in Ghana. The quality of planning is one area of concern. The office has made some improvements in administrative issues, but has deferred implementation of substantive initiatives.

Knowledge and information management are not effective, even though they are as much assets as funds, and must work well for UNDP to perform its functions. Weaknesses in M&E reflect capacity constraints at UNDP as well as among national partners. The quality of reporting from national partners is in many instances inadequate, but the country office lacks scope to provide the necessary support and guidance.

UNDP’s good relationship with the Government is essential for its effectiveness and must be preserved. High responsiveness, however, has resulted in interventions becoming more vulnerable to shifting government backing and changes in political priorities. For instance, an agreement to support the newly established Constitutional Review Commission meant a reduction in support to other projects in the governance portfolio. While in some cases the organization needs to be more agile in responding to strategic shifts or emerging issues, it must also avoid the risk that in regularly reacting to ad hoc demands, it defers strategic support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should bolster its advisory capacity to support Ghana’s transition to middle-income status. It should ensure that its portfolio reflects the dynamic environment in Ghana as the country continues its journey of building an inclusive society and prosperous nation. Central to this is UNDP’s continued advocacy for a human development approach to Ghana’s growth and development agenda.
- UNDP should continue its efforts to strengthen democratic governance, focusing on providing advice to strengthen the knowledge and skills base of national partners. It should also continue to advocate for appropriate resourcing of governance institutions that are essential for maintaining the positive trajectory for democratic governance in Ghana.
- UNDP should focus its efforts on strengthening the capacity of the government to respond to climate change in the national, regional and global arena.
- UNDP should support building national capacity for monitoring and evaluation in Ghana. This should be done in partnership with other United Nations organizations.
- UNDP should improve its dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, in particular, civil society and the private sector, to enhance partnerships and foster national ownership of UNDP’s interventions.
- UNDP should transform itself into a knowledge-based advisory organization. UNDP needs to improve its knowledge and information management in all areas of its work, strengthen its internal monitoring and evaluation systems and improve its communication.
- UNDP should expedite implementation of improvements to its business processes and operational capacity, and align these with the new strategic direction of the country office.
- As part of transitioning to a restructured portfolio, UNDP should develop sustainability plans and exit strategies in key programme areas. This should be done in agreement with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, implementing partners and responsible parties, and other critical development partners.

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Kenya has gone through an intense political transition in recent years, following widespread violence after the 2007 general elections. Adoption of the Constitution in 2010 promised the devolution of powers to local authorities, peaceful and fair elections, judicial reforms, and inclusive, rights-based development plans. Kenya’s economy, while among the largest in sub-Saharan Africa, is vulnerable to shocks. Nearly half the population lives in poverty.

In responding to longstanding and emerging national priorities, UNDP programmes have taken up issues related to democratic governance, disaster risk reduction and recovery, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, inclusive economic growth, and energy and environment for sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2009 to 2013.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2012: $173.2 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2008-2012**

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<tr>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2008-2012 ($ MILLIONS)**

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<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction/MDG achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment and sustainable development</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis prevention and recovery</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic governance</td>
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</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Across all programme areas, the evaluation affirmed that objectives aligned with national long-term development priorities and emerging needs, particularly in response to the crises following the 2007-2008 post-election violence, and contributed to strengthening the foundation for development. UNDP backed constitutional, legal and electoral reforms to bolster governance institutions and increase citizens’ confidence in them. It helped put public service reform firmly on the national agenda. National funding of the Public Service Transformation Department increased every year and government staff were systematically seconded to the department, highlighting its value. The institutionalization of the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES) was a critical step, given its crucial role in public-sector reform management.

Mobilizing a critical mass of civil society organizations promoted constitutional principles, including human rights and gender equality. Involving 233 of these groups, the Amkeni Wakenya initiative has become an important platform for providing citizens, including minority and marginalized groups, with opportunities to engage on various concerns. Further, with UNDP assistance, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, National Gender and Equality Commission, and Commission on Administrative Justice have been fully established as institutions. The National Gender and Equality Commission successfully monitored the 2013 elections from a gender and human rights perspective.

In disaster risk and conflict prevention, UNDP played a critical role in bringing different parties together and introducing best practices from other countries. District Peace Committees have proven to be a valuable interface between the Government, community leaders and civil society when responding to situations of conflict and insecurity, with strong indications that early warning on conflict in communities has improved radically since the 2007-2008 post-election violence.

Towards inclusive economic growth, UNDP stressed the economic empowerment of particularly vulnerable groups, such as unemployed youth, women and owners of small/medium businesses, and the strengthening of public-private partnerships. Technical advisers helped the Government set its development goals and prepare critical roadmaps, such as Vision 2030.

In environment and energy, UNDP helped broker collaboration between the Government and communities, including on conservation issues, and developed strategic
partnerships with the private sector in responding to climate change. Six Minimum Energy Performance Standards were set, along with testing procedures. A number of South-South exchanges included Kenya receiving support from Ethiopia and Malawi on climate-change adaptation, and providing Sudan with expertise on climate-change adaptation at the community level.

UNDP has advanced national awareness and action on gender and human rights, such as through the development of gender and human rights indicators for NIMES and gender-responsive statistics. With devolution an emerging, urgent area, UNDP can take a lead in ensuring the further promotion of gender equality and human rights among local authorities.

Some strategic choices facilitated the achievement of programmatic goals. They included, for example, UNDP’s scaled-up peacebuilding and conflict transformation interventions after the post-election violence. The country programme’s overall ability to demonstrate higher level results, however, was hindered by limitations in programme design and approaches, including the limited scale of interventions compared to demand on the ground; the fragmentation of projects and outcomes; and lack of clarity in project-outcome linkages. Sustainability was an issue due to a lack of clear exit strategies, and limited availability of funds, human resources and capacity among partner agencies after the completion of UNDP projects.

Broad collaboration with partners, including civil society organizations and the private sector, demonstrated a strategic use of partnerships. Civil society groups, in particular, have taken a substantive role as implementing partners, for example, in governance. But they often lack necessary project management and coordination skills. Further, among the United Nations and other development partners, there are many who share similar development goals. UNDP needs to strengthen collaboration with these entities, which often have larger resources, to synergize efforts, scale up results and avoid duplication of work.

One of the most valued aspects in the UNDP programme, particularly among national implementing partners, was UNDP’s ability to show critical interlinkages among various issues, so that the programme can be designed to achieve development goals in an optimal way. For example, in promoting private sector development and economic empowerment, the fairly ‘new’ concepts of inclusive market and value chain were emphasized. Links between poverty and environment, and climate change and energy efficiency, were introduced.

UNDP has brought a number of comparative advantages to its programmes in Kenya, such as an ability to influence public policies and legal/institutional frameworks, engage with a wide range of stakeholders, and respond to emerging needs. Its strong emphasis on national ownership and sustained support even during the most challenging times has earned it the distinction of being a trusted and reliable partner.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should take a more strategic approach to programming to improve its programme effectiveness.
- UNDP should re-examine its programme results framework and overall results/progress reporting systems for improved demonstration of results and greater accountability.
- Critical risk areas in internal operational modalities and programme delivery—particularly the timeliness in financial and procurement transaction processes—should be urgently addressed to improve programme efficiency and sustainability.
- Given the significant role civil society organizations have had in the country programme implementation, and yet with varying levels of capability, UNDP should define a clear strategy for effectively working with them as implementing partners.
- UNDP should continue (and scale up) its efforts to champion issues related to human rights, gender equity and protection of vulnerable people, including those living with HIV/AIDS.
- In consultation with the Government, UNDP should take the lead in support of the country’s new devolution system, ensuring capacity-building of county-level authorities, promotion of human development and use of partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- UNDP should strengthen its strategic partnerships with international development partners, by ensuring appropriate representation and timely and close communication with them at sector-related and other external engagements.

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In recovering from a long civil war, Liberia has seen remarkable efforts by its Government as well as bilateral and multilateral development partners. Fundamental gaps remain, however, such as the large share of Liberians still living in poverty. Closing these dichotomies will be vital to long-term peace.

Starting in 2004, UNDP operated in the context of post-conflict recovery, reconstruction and peacebuilding, with programmes for disarmament, demobilization, reintroduction and rehabilitation; democratic governance; community-based recovery; human rights, protection and gender; capacity-building for the HIV/AIDS response; and environmental management. In 2008, it reduced its focus to democratic governance and pro-poor economic growth. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2011.

UNDP contributed to all of the most significant priorities of Liberia’s transition, as defined by the Government, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and leading analyses of the structural causes of Liberia’s conflict. Working with the Governance Commission and other targeted commissions as well as relevant ministries, UNDP sought to address the exclusion of large population segments from decision-making and political power; legislation that institutionalizes ethnic, tribal and religious discrimination; inequitable land distribution; corruption; and human rights violations. It worked on key institutional aspects of the rule of law, with the appropriate exception of the reform of the armed forces. These areas of work remain key to long-term stability and development, and in most cases, involve managing power relationships. An overall strategic approach was to establish special commissions to analyse issues, develop policies and seek redress. They were mostly ineffective, however, with insufficient enforcement capacity, and were blocked by vested interests.

By attempting to address as many priorities as possible, UNDP spread its capacity thin, resulting in a lack of technical depth, and compromising programme sustainability and effectiveness. This tendency was exacerbated by the Government’s wish to have a neutral agency such as UNDP in a leadership role across many arenas, and the President’s direct and successful efforts to mobilize resources by ensuring UNDP involvement.

UNDP’s rural development programmes largely consisted of projects implemented quickly, in a semi-humanitarian assistance mode. The development experience gained by UNDP in other post-conflict settings worldwide was not sufficiently applied. Further, low population density and large distances between communities made it more difficult to introduce effective cost-recovery mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Most such schemes are likely to remain dependent on external support or subsidies for a long time.

UNDP positioned itself as a service provider to all donors in the procurement of equipment for the early rehabilitation of essential institutions; managing contracts for rehabilitation and reconstruction; procuring essential supplies for a number of institutions; sponsoring key positions in various branches of Government; managing quick implementation projects on behalf of donors; and administering large multidonor trust funds. This role
strengthened UNDP capacity to support aid coordination. But it also tended to carry on too long, reducing sustainability and adversely affecting national capacity-building. This situation persisted in part because of the continued lack of confidence among other international partners in Liberia’s national institutions.

Virtually all government counterparts criticized the efficiency of UNDP’s procurement. While delivering on UNDP’s fiduciary commitments while meeting programming deadlines posed a challenge in a difficult institutional environment, cumbersome procedures often resulted in goods or services being delivered late.

A significant capacity deficit remains at the level of middle management and below in all government agencies. Education levels are low, and it is difficult to recruit and retain well-qualified Liberians. The problem is severe in Monrovia and considerably more so at sub-national government levels. If the decentralization plans championed by UNDP and the Governance Commission are to succeed, sufficient incentives need to be put in place to attract well-qualified civil servants to local government posts for extended periods of time.

A project-based approach to programmes could have benefited from a more coherent, strategic approach that capitalized on synergies among UNDP and United Nations country team programmes, especially at the local level, which saw a number of largely parallel interventions. As a whole, the United Nations integration strategy in Liberia was vague, possibly reducing potential benefits. While UNDP backed government-led efforts to define necessary structural changes, for instance, there was relatively little evidence of UNDP using the UNMIL Security Council mandate as leverage with the National Assembly to exert pressure for change in the areas of land reform or anti-corruption and human rights measures.

To fulfil donor requirements, activities and outputs were monitored and reported on a project-by-project basis. There appeared to be no systematic framework for monitoring development results at the outcome/impact or the local/national levels.

As Liberia transitions from UNMIL, UNDP must support national leadership over aid coordination. Efforts underway to support the transition of some projects to a national execution modality should continue, focusing on building national capacities to adopt leadership roles. A continued focus on addressing the root causes of conflict will also be critical to support long-term stability, peace and development in the country.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should focus on more geographically and thematically targeted projects and programmes.
- There is an urgent need for a coherent, strategic and comprehensive programme approach. Synergies and mutual reinforcement need to be captured with a view towards enhancing overall results at the outcome level. Success depends on the extent to which broader structural impediments of progress are addressed.
- UNDP needs to transition away from quickly implemented projects to longer-term development project activities that increasingly place national institutions in the lead of programme management and implementation. These activities should also shift their emphasis from infrastructure rehabilitation and the procurement of equipment to long-term capacity building.
- Every UNDP project should have an explicit exit strategy, developed in conjunction with Liberia’s Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and the counterpart government agency.
- Furthering government efforts to promote gender equality, improve women’s access to economic resources and address gender-based violence should be a key dimension of the UNDP programme.
- Given the importance of the UNDP mandate in integrated peacekeeping missions, Member States should consider allocating an assessed budget for governance and essential development aspects of missions.
- UNDP and UNMIL will need to initiate a systematic handover process.
- ‘Delivering as One’ should harness the technical capacity of the entire United Nations system for joint implementation of programmes and activities.
- UNDP should develop in-house senior technical advisory capacity in each priority thematic area to provide advisory services to the Government, the Resident Coordinator, the UN team and UNDP senior management.
- Cost considerations need to be balanced with those of quality and professional standards. UNDP needs to deploy additional capacity at the county level to ensure systematic monitoring and oversight.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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UNDP IN MALAWI

Malawi is a small, landlocked country that ranks among the poorest nations. The population is predominantly rural although rapidly urbanizing. Key issues include democratic accountability and access to justice and to social services, especially for the most vulnerable groups. The country depends heavily on donor assistance, which typically comprises 30 percent of the national budget.

UNDP programmes have addressed challenges related to poverty reduction and economic growth, energy and the environment, governance, gender and women’s empowerment, mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS, and capacity development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2011.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2010: $144.7 MILLION

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has been highly relevant to Malawi’s development needs and the overall mandate of promoting sustainable human-centred development underpinned by poverty reduction, equity, fairness and justice. The organization demonstrated a great deal of responsiveness to emerging needs, including by reorganizing some of its activities into a cluster focusing on growth and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in response to the Government’s emphasis on sustainable economic growth.

Programmes have paid particular attention to the human development dimensions of gender equality, women’s rights and vulnerable groups. In achieving these objectives, however, UNDP has not focused on selected areas of strategic significance. It has been reactive rather than proactive, and has not been as well targeted, deliberate or transparent as it might have been. It did not take advantage of complementarities among interventions. There was some indication, however, of a shift to a more measured and strategic response.

Some notable contributions to development results included support for holding credible elections, progressive expansion of the civil society network on human rights, development of capacity in data collection and analysis, and development of systems, institutions and policies that have served as a framework for the country’s decentralization programme.

As part of public sector reform and service delivery, UNDP adopted a three-pronged approach to capacity development, focusing on improving the policy environment, developing and strengthening institutions, and developing human resources. This led to stronger capacities to implement the MDGs, and coordinate and manage development assistance.

An imbalance between the demand for upstream and downstream activities meant that programmes were skewed towards upstream activities in response to government demand. Although UNDP engages in a number of downstream activities, some informants suggested these operated without a clearly defined strategy or policy framework. More recently, UNDP concentrated downstream work in areas where policy development is one of the preconditions for providing sustainable solutions to development problems. This was the case in strengthening the microfinance system, where UNDP worked with other donors to bolster a policy and institutional environment conducive to pro-poor provision of microfinance services, using best practices.

Despite a greater emphasis on upstream work, UNDP is more successful in its downstream interventions, partly because upstream activities face more obstacles to efficacy. Most of the upstream work has succeeded in producing outputs, such as policies and strategies, but not many of them have been approved by the Government.
or implemented. UNDP has not generally exploited its role as a trusted government partner to influence institutional changes, particularly implementation of sectoral policies developed with its support.

National partnership continues to be biased towards the central Government. UNDP needs to expand its work with local authorities or make clear its comparative advantage and how it will seek partnerships to enhance links with the local level. Programmes involving work with local authorities and non-state actors have been more successful and have a high prospect of sustainability. Expanding the UN Delivering as One initiative has the potential to enhance such initiatives.

In general, weak links between outputs, indicators and outcomes in the results framework led to an apparent lack of coherence among the interventions as well as mixed effectiveness of some. A well-articulated programme framework might have helped highlight risks and conditions for success, and the potential roles of partners in jointly achieving outcomes.

The lack of well-designed, comprehensive strategies undercut sustainability. Although most programmes included capacity development and used national implementation, most had no explicit exit strategies. Often the absence of government funding further hampered sustainability. Some downstream activities were highly dependent on UNDP, demonstrating little government commitment in terms of counterpart funding or integration of innovations into mainstream government activities. As a result, opportunities were few for downstream activities to scale up after UNDP funding phased out.

Performance was greatly hampered by inefficiency, due to issues involving dependence on resource mobilization and internal systems. UNDP approaches were widely acknowledged as sound, but their ability to catalyse other activities was constrained by rigidities in systems and procedures. These manifested, for example, in delayed disbursement of resources to implementing partners.

In sum, UNDP support ranks relatively high on relevance and effectiveness, but less so on sustainability and efficiency. It could do more in building on core comparative advantages, such as by taking a more focused approach to programmes, and ensuring follow-through on policy and other upstream interventions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP needs to rationalize its programme portfolio in line with its comparative advantage and to respond to emerging issues that are critical to UNDP and to Malawi. Governance remains a critical development challenge; UNDP should consider extending its focus to economic governance, while also streamlining the breadth of its focus. It should concentrate on capacity-building and coordination of multistakeholder governance activities, especially in elections. In terms of pro-poor growth, it needs to scale up advocacy for poverty reduction and human rights. Partnerships with civil society, the private sector and local institutions need strengthening.
- UNDP should expand its capacities for policy analysis and engagement so it can fully exploit its comparative advantage in upstream work.
- UNDP should use its privileged position with the Government to engage in dialogue to facilitate adoption of policies already developed and implementation of policies already adopted, along with other key initiatives.
- In its downstream activities, UNDP should shift its approach from direct interaction with beneficiaries to building the capacity of service providers such as the private sector, NGOs and other non-state actors.
- UNDP should consider adopting a political economy approach, which entails understanding the realities of power relations, incentives and change processes, to the analysis of development challenges in order to inform overall programme design.
- UNDP should move away from a project approach and towards a programme approach. This will encourage integration of related activities into one programme, and ensure coherence and strategic focus.
- UNDP should design programmes with realistic budgets to improve efficiency.
- UNDP should endeavour to strengthen the capacity of its implementing partners in monitoring, evaluation, financial management and report writing.

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Mauritania, one of the least developed countries, has high rates of poverty, and strong geographical and social inequalities. Democratic institutions are still weak, while the environment is vulnerable to fallout from climate changes.

UNDP has provided support in the areas of fighting against poverty, governance and the environment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2009 to mid-2015.

On the whole, UNDP interventions were relevant and aligned with national priorities. They capitalized on UNDP comparative advantages—its neutrality, advocacy and technical expertise. But questions have also arisen around the reach of this support. While the organization has undeniably contributed to development results in Mauritania, the results remain partial, rather than transformational. Without a well-defined strategy for the programme as a whole, there was a tendency to back actions or specific processes, without really strengthening capacity or addressing structural problems.

As a long-standing partner with access to policymakers, UNDP made some notable contributions to national strategic planning. Advocacy encouraged the integration of the environment in the third poverty reduction strategy paper, for example. The second National Environmental Action Plan became more concise and pragmatic than the first. UNDP supported the creation of a ministry for the environment, and contributed to adoption of the National Strategy on Gender Mainstreaming.

Limited national ownership has meant that several strategies have waited a long time for validation, however, such as on microfinance. Other strategies or legal instruments have never been adopted, such as a strategic framework for public service.

Adopted policy documents have not always been followed by consistent implementation. Despite UNDP’s contributions to the formulation and monitoring of the poverty reduction strategy paper, for example, results were not felt on the ground. The territorial governance and local development project supported the creation of regional thematic groups that developed guidelines for regional development, but the groups lost their dynamism after the production of the documents. Regional poverty strategies have not been implemented due to the lack of resources and capacities. Links between on-the-ground interventions to reduce poverty and inequalities and upstream support were not clearly articulated.

In direct interventions, some innovative and successful solutions, such as the introduction of multifunction platforms, contributed to improved living conditions. Rapid recovery actions extended support to fragile communities. Quality remained variable, however. The dispersion of projects limited their visibility and potential for multiplier effects, as well as the capacity of UNDP to follow them regularly and to learn from them. Many interventions responded to the immediate causes of poverty and vulnerability, but not to structural causes, such as unequal access to social services and natural resources.

In the field of the environment, pilot activities at the community level did not feed into strategic policy discussions. For the governance programme, the focus was not on substantive issues, but on support for tools and work approaches, often in response to requests made by government administrations.

UNDP interventions have contributed, to some extent, to reduced inequalities and exclusion, and to the empowerment of women. Downstream interventions clearly targeted women and vulnerable populations. They contributed directly to reducing domestic work-related
burdens, and increased financial self-sufficiency. Small facilities such as wells, catchments for surface water and solar panels have somewhat reduced inequalities in some vulnerable rural communities. Some interventions in governance took a gender dimension into account, such as through mobilizing women to engage in the electoral system. The reduction of inequalities was mostly not included in environmental activities.

The lack of sufficient attention to inequalities stems from the fact that no overall strategy was in place for the consistent integration, monitoring and evaluation of gender and other dimensions. By creating a gender committee and subscribing to the corporate Gender Equality Seal, the country office has put in place mechanisms to improve at least some level of integration.

On the whole, programme sustainability was low, due to a lack of exit strategies, national ownership and capacity-building. At the community level, interventions often targeted vulnerable populations that do not necessarily have the human or financial capacity to maintain new technologies or facilities requiring maintenance and/or periodic repairs, such as pumps or solar freezers. Mechanisms for follow-up or supervision beyond the project had not been foreseen. Interventions improving traditional production techniques—for example, surface water collection systems, or preparation of couscous for sale—are potentially more manageable.

In terms of capacity-building, the emphasis was often on the production of outputs, including through the use of external resources, rather than on strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries. For example, the provision of expertise to support Parliament has not translated into the acquisition of internal skills. These shortfalls meant that despite a new arsenal of strategic policy and legal documents, results will not last.

The functioning and organization of the country office to some extent undermined UNDP efficiency and effectiveness. A lack of communication meant missed opportunities for sharing collective expertise. There could have been better collaboration between the three units of UNDP working on the poverty reduction strategy paper, the regional poverty plans and community recovery, for example. Other issues involved delays in recruitment and purchases. The national implementation modality relied heavily on the time-consuming processing of direct payments, reducing staff time for more strategic work.

According to a very large number of stakeholders in Mauritania, UNDP is an important partner in development. But without a clearly articulated strategic vision, coupled with slow response times and insufficient attention to details, its reputation could be tarnished. Despite its traditionally strong positioning in the development landscape of Mauritania, the organization is increasingly being challenged by other players, new or old, with implications including critical challenges in the mobilization of resources.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should develop a medium- to long-term strategic vision for its entire programme. It must identify niches where it has recognized comparative advantages. It must strengthen its role in advocacy with the Government within the framework of its long-term vision. The preparation of the new poverty reduction strategy paper is a good entry point to identify and then work on development issues.
- UNDP needs to deepen its analyses, including risks and potential political blockages, and develop strategies to address them.
- UNDP should ensure the balance between upstream and downstream interventions, while ensuring a link between the two levels. Interventions must be based on national commitments to implementation with monitoring arrangements. The dialogue on change must be structured and followed. Field interventions should be geographically concentrated for more impact.
- UNDP should strengthen its efforts to integrate gender and human rights in its programme.
- At the office level, the country office must energize its team, improve internal communications and create a culture of results-based collaboration.
- UNDP should develop a strategy for a careful transition towards a genuine modality of national implementation.
- UNDP needs to improve its external communications and strategy for partnership and mobilization of resources.

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Since the 1992 peace accords that ended the civil war, Mozambique has achieved remarkable success on a number of fronts. It has navigated the transition from war to peace, and sustained political stability while transforming its political system to a multi-party democracy. Steady economic growth rates have averaged 6 percent to 7 percent a year over the past several years. As a least developed country, however, Mozambique faces considerable development challenges. In tackling these, the role and contributions of external partners remain important.

UNDP’s programmes have straddled many themes, ranging from emergency relief to specialized development support and services designed to meet the long-term needs of economic growth, poverty reduction and increasing the capacity of the public sector. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2004.

UNDP in Mozambique has had an excellent record in helping to establish key institutions such as the Disaster Preparedness Institute and the National AIDS Council, and in driving key initiatives in demining. It was widely commended for its role in coordinating the donor response to the 2000 floods and the mobilization of more than $450 million in aid.

A district planning model the organization piloted jointly with the United Nations Capital Development Fund in Nampula province was replicated with World Bank funds in four other provinces. The Ministry of Planning and Finance adopted it as a nationwide model; it is now the basis for national legislation on local government. UNDP has also been at the forefront of supporting the strengthening of the justice sector, and a credible electoral and court system.

Less impressive results resulted from support to key democratic institutions such as Parliament, prisons and police, given entrenched interests that hinder reform. A number of challenges arose from limited institutional capacities. In spite of considerable assistance, the National AIDS Council, for instance, had difficulty managing the considerable resources received from development partners. Institutional weakness and lack of transparency affected performance in disaster mitigation and demining, and in the case of Environment Ministry programmes, led to the withdrawal of some key UNDP programme partners.

UNDP did not succeed in mainstreaming gender equality in its programmes. Poverty reduction projects were, with a few exceptions, localized and geographically isolated, with only a modest promise of being scaled up or replicated. One exception was the Poverty Observatory, which has potential to expand conceptual understanding of poverty, and nudge national initiatives closer to human poverty concerns and national Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets.

Mozambique may have been an example of how UNDP does well in conflict and crisis situations, but finds it difficult to carve out a distinctive niche once the agenda shifts to long-term development perspectives. Inflexible programming procedures and the lack of resources outside five-year programming cycles may explain a lack of a flexibility, agility and forward thinking. UNDP was mostly absent from policy discussions between the government and its development partners, and may not be competitive or well placed enough to provide leadership and substantive capacities in current policy areas. These include, in particular, support for developing policy alternatives and enhanced government
capacities within the context of poverty reduction and the budget support modality. When expertise is needed on issues dealing with fiscal or monetary policy, administrative reform, tax policy or agricultural programmes, officials have partnered with other organizations with a comparative advantage and expertise.

Current UNDP programming, by contrast, lacks the necessary coherence for a clear strategic position. Many projects seem to be ‘supply driven’, kept on because resources or support are available, and not because they are part of an effective strategy for reducing poverty or enhancing human well-being. Demining, for example, uses significant resources, almost as much as the fight against HIV/AIDS, even though its contribution to the human development agenda may be far less.

Declining resources have aggravated the fragmentation of UNDP’s focus because, as Mozambique restored peace, and funds available for emergency response fell, resources for regular programming were spread thinly across a number of remotely connected initiatives. UNDP needed to concentrate not just on what it does best, but also on linking projects and programmes so they explicitly build upon each other. The local governance and decentralization programme, for example, could incorporate components that support income generation, and address both human and income poverty.

Changing modalities for development funding in Mozambique have meant that bilateral donors have more mechanisms for channeling their development assistance, including into the central treasury as direct budget support. UNDP has only recently begun to participate as an observer when budget support donors convene, but its presence and impact were modest. One priority could be support for a strategy to ensure that direct budget support achieves effective and sustained benefits in terms of poverty reduction and the MDGs.

Looking ahead, the nature of the strategic partnerships that UNDP forges with the Government and national development constituencies will be critical to the repositioning of its contributions. Success largely depends on anticipating national needs and redefining roles as priorities shift. Among other ways forward, the organization may find that informed advocacy to stake out strong positions on human rights and development will be more important than the existing relatively narrow focus on preserving a reputation for neutrality and generating resources. UNDP should take stronger stands in supporting programmes that are of strategic value and are in line with its core priorities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Define a coherent and compelling vision and an effective communication strategy as a necessary first step in increasing UNDP’s profile and relevance in a competitive environment.
- Develop an effective transition strategy from crisis response to long-term development.
- Develop a strategic response on how to support governments that have adopted direct budget support at corporate and country level.
- Support capacity building for development management and aid coordination to promote government leadership and national ownership of the process.
- Champion and strengthen UN system collaboration through joint programming and broaden non-traditional partnerships.
- Redouble efforts to enable civil society to have a genuinely independent input to the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty through the Poverty Observatory.
- Sharpen strategic focus, achieve greater coherence and enhance programme effectiveness by reducing the number of core areas.
- Promote a rural development focus and accord increased priority in UNDP programming to reducing human poverty and improving rural livelihoods.
- Build on past successes and increase initiatives to strengthen local government.
- Improve and diversify resource mobilization and partnership strategies.
- Increase in-house expertise by expanding the knowledge base.
- Improve business processes, including through strategic guidance from headquarters on challenges such as how to respond to direct budget support.

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Niger, one of the largest countries in Africa in territorial size, ranks at the bottom of the global Human Development Index. It confronts a complex mix of challenges—among them, political instability, a fragile economy, inadequate technical capacities, scarce energy and environmental pressures.

UNDP has supported efforts across these areas, with programmes related to poverty and gender, the environment, crises and disasters, and governance. A focus on poverty reduction gave way to an emphasis on governance in the wake of a series of elections, and a call for UNDP to adapt its cooperation plans to support this critical process. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2013.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP achieved tangible results in assisting Niger to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and development strategies at central and local levels. It provided solutions to development problems and attempted to influence cross-cutting themes, such as gender, human rights, capacity development and results-based management, albeit with mixed results. Interventions were highly relevant in relation to national priorities and community needs.

Contributions were made through experimental pilot projects that were scaled up, as was the case with decentralization. UNDP managed the first pilot project in this area, which laid the ground for larger-scale interventions by other partners, including the World Bank. The consolidation of the decentralization process through creating shared facilities built synergies among various actors. A Management Training Center for national, regional and municipal actors, for instance, marked a significant step towards establishing an overall management framework and building capacity. Local authorities benefited from the creation of an agency in charge of financing.

Institutional governance-related frameworks emerged that gradually established stronger procedures for consultation, negotiation, arbitration, reporting and the administration of justice. A national strategy and legal framework were adopted for legal assistance and legal aid, while a statistical system now provides information for decision-makers on the structure of the judiciary and the functioning of the legal system.

For economic development and poverty reduction, strategic tools for implementing and monitoring development policies led to the incorporation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and human rights considerations in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Other interventions provided target communities with basic social services. They helped alleviate the workload of women, cultivate alternative employment and income, and open access to modest sources of credit.

Several sectoral policy frameworks and processes improved the management of natural resources and assisted Niger to meet international obligations. Warning and crisis management systems were strengthened in response to the increased frequency of such events.

Progress was slow on gender equality, which received insufficient visibility, although gender approaches were incorporated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. UNDP supported the process leading to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the adoption of a National Gender Policy. It also helped strengthen the response capacities of the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection, trained
women elected to female leadership, and trained national actors on stopping violence against women and advocating for the rights of women under CEDAW.

UNDP’s direct (mainly project) and indirect (non-project) interventions have had meaningful results, but the balance between the two was not always understood by national partners. Some asked for more strategic support, others for more operational action. Ambiguities in the balance were particularly acute under the outcome related to poverty—where there was a commitment to implementing strategic reforms even as the majority of resources went to basic social service delivery.

While programme execution was initially assisted by a support unit in the Ministry of Economy and Finance, this arrangement was replaced by the principle of project focal points in counterpart national institutions. The shift was driven by a desire to strengthen national execution. In practice, it proved to be premature, given limits among national counterparts in both planning and monitoring activities. Problems of national ownership have hindered capacity development and raised questions over the effectiveness and sustainability of some outcomes. Capacity-building results are uncertain; there is still much to be done before it has real impact.

The programme was efficient, with procurement protocols judged transparent and fair. Yet abnormally long delays caused by UNDP processes detracted from overall efficiency and added costs. Bottlenecks in work programmes, the availability of funding and the delivery of reporting documents forced programmes to deliver in a significantly shorter timeframe than originally foreseen.

UNDP played a leading role in coordinating development cooperation, including through an arrangement for managing aid. Managing relations with donors was highly effective, as shown by good results in mobilizing funds. Yet partners expressed disappointment that the expected drive towards harmonized procedures, per the Paris Declaration, had not materialized.

Given its fragile development status, Niger will continue to struggle with a number of chronic and emerging challenges. UNDP has shown the value of its assistance in generating both strategic and operational results, and offers clear comparative advantages in the areas in which it works. Its limitations are often linked to the weakness of its own resources. At the operational level, where demand is great, this is a particular handicap. Good resource mobilization strategies, effective communication and collaboration with other donors need to be part of clarifying the difference between initial implementation and scaling up, and coordinating efforts to avoid the kinds of abrupt interruptions in support that the people of Niger can ill afford.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Improve strategies for national capacity development. Actions should be taken jointly by the Country Office and national partners to identify the minimum level of activity required to stimulate further and more appropriate development of national capacity, while continuing with conventional training and workshops.
- Improve the handling of gender issues. In general, gender issues should be more adequately reflected in programme documents (in terms of context analysis, target setting and strategies).
- Strengthen, clarify and restructure economic governance in the programme, especially in the crucial area of public financial management. A choice should be made between continuing to dilute the theme in the poverty reduction outcome or giving it more visibility in a wider governance programme.
- Improve the wording of the outcome covering poverty reduction, gender and the MDGs to overcome the ambiguity undermining its coherence.
- Improve quality assurance. The Country Office should focus more on the core substantive work of the programme and less on managing procedures.
- Strengthen human resources; further recruitment efforts are needed.
- Improve communication with national partners on mandates and strategies, and to give more visibility to national counterparts. Greater clarity would also strengthen national ownership.
- Be more proactive and improve communication on procedures.
- Give the monitoring and evaluation function greater autonomy. While a fully-autonomous M&E unit would be the best solution, the Economic Analysis and Development Strategy Division could take on this function.
- Improve national ownership. National ownership needs to be managed throughout the entire programme cycle; it can be achieved by designing specific strategies to be included in annual workplans.

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Despite Nigeria’s significant natural and human resources, and its considerable economic potential, the human development index and all other social indicators have declined since the 1970s. The challenges of reviving the economy while dealing with globalization and consolidating the transition to democracy demand a rethinking of past approaches. There is, above all, an urgent need to restore the non-oil productive sectors, increase employment, and combat poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Key areas of UNDP support have included governance, poverty reduction, and sustainable agriculture, environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2002.

UNDP enjoyed relatively high visibility in Nigeria. After the restoration of democracy in 1999, the new Government immediately requested the organization to intervene in crucial and sensitive areas such as elections and conflict prevention. This support, combined with UNDP’s involvement with promoting national dialogue on the country’s human development agenda, reinforced its coordination and advocacy role. While the organization also made a serious effort to respond to the Government’s need for policy advice and capacity-building in strategic institutions, its approach was not sufficiently structured or coherent.

UNDP’s integrated community development programmes brought basic social services to deprived communities. These projects included water and sanitation, renovation of health facilities, training for community health workers, and functional literacy classes. But the programmes, totaling 750 by 2002, had a wide geographical spread that led to dispersion, overextension and limited impact. Development results largely depended on the institutional capacities, dynamism and interest of state governments, and issues of ownership and sustainability needed to be addressed.

Amid growing concerns about youth unemployment and civil unrest, UNDP established Skills Development Centres and, in parallel with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, promoted microfinance and microcredit schemes across the country. The results of these initiatives have varied widely depending on local conditions. Furthermore, given the size of Nigeria’s population, they have had only a marginal impact on the unemployment problems of each state. The microcredit programme did encourage the Central Bank to develop guidelines and a national policy framework for microcredit.

Under the National Governance Programme, UNDP provided capacity-building for the National Assembly and support to civil society organizations, political parties and business groups for civic education, political participation and conflict management. It assisted in setting up an Independent Policy Group to provide direct advice to the President. The governance programme provided an important framework for supporting governance interventions and strengthening democracy, even if it had not yet adopted a very systematic approach to governance challenges. Support for anti-corruption initiatives and civic education should continue to be actively promoted.

One of UNDP’s most significant contributions was advocacy for legislation against harmful practices against women. This resulted in federal and state legislation on issues including female genital mutilation, early marriage,
trafficking and gender-based violence.

The National Partnership Forum and the Human Development Fund established an important dialogue bringing together the Government, the private sector and civil society organizations. The major innovation was corporate responsibility initiatives with Shell and Chevron, key oil companies in the Delta Region, around issues of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and resource mobilization for community-based poverty reduction programmes. For this effort to be judged a success, however, UNDP must play a neutral, facilitative and development-oriented role, and not simply become part of a corporate public relations exercise.

UNDP’s initial orientation around grass-roots development activities was appropriate prior to 1999. Valid equity considerations led to coverage in all 36 states and the federal capital territory. But hardly any interventions achieved sufficient critical mass to encourage scaling up or to influence upstream policy formulation. Direct delivery of resources without substantive local commitment may have created the impression that UNDP was acting as a substitute for government and contributing to ‘micro-successes’ in a sea of ‘macro-failure’. If the organization is to work successfully at the grass-roots, projects and programmes need clear exit strategies and direct links to broader policy goals.

It is also the case that political will and an enabling policy environment are crucial for achieving results. Nigeria currently lacks an overarching poverty reduction and macro-economic policy framework, and federal policy influence over the states is relatively weak. Even if UNDP had intervened more effectively, particularly in poverty reduction activities, it likely would not have had a significant impact.

For UNDP to play a better role, there is a need to balance expectations against reality. Nigeria is a country with domestic resources that dwarf external aid, and a complex three-tier federal system. Its political history has resulted in tensions often evident at every level of government. UNDP could provide strategic support at both the federal and state level, but without a strong institutional and policy framework, and reforming champions from within to carry forward the development agenda, coordination and facilitation alone may not lead to concrete results. The Nigeria Government and UNDP will need to work together on a new or revitalized agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP’s role should be catalytic and not a substitute for government or local efforts. If UNDP is to make a difference, this must derive from the level of trust accorded to it by the Government and from the optimal exploitation of its comparative advantage. UNDP should therefore seek to strengthen its advocacy and policy support for poverty reduction and human development and concentrate on strengthening the enabling policy environment to address the high levels of poverty in Nigeria.
- UNDP should narrow its focus and geographical spread, and sharpen the substantive elements of its support. There should be some judicious winnowing out of ongoing activities at the state level.
- UNDP support should deepen and continue to strengthen its support towards the consolidation of democracy, conflict prevention and anti-corruption initiatives. This support should build on the existing National Governance Programme and the ongoing initiatives of other partners, and focus on strengthening key government institutions such as Parliament, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission. The approach should be within a clear conceptual framework and not pursued on a purely ad hoc basis. Support to the Independent Policy Group should emphasize advocating the institutionalization of its role as a think tank. UNDP should examine the political support for the National Planning Commission and its potential to become effective, and should plan its approach accordingly.
- UNDP should accord priority to states as strategic entry points for upstream policy support, since interventions there can be as important as those at the federal level.
- With regard to partnerships, resource mobilization and operational modalities, UNDP should seek to expand opportunities for cost-sharing, including in collaboration with the private sector, towards expanding its capacity to promote its human development agenda.
- UNDP should build substantive capacity within the Country Office. Every effort should be made to avoid the frequent changes of leadership that have weakened the organization’s role during the past decade.

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Since 1991, the Republic of the Congo has engaged in a transition towards multiparty democracy and a market economy, marred during the nineties by repeated civil conflicts. A reconciliation and rebuilding process that began in 2000 is well advanced but still not completed. Despite booming income from oil, the country struggles with acute poverty and a low human development index rating.

The UNDP programme addressed three major themes: good governance, poverty reduction, and environmental and natural-resource management. Three cross-cutting areas were gender, HIV/AIDS, and new information and communications technologies. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2007.

UNDP programmes were generally relevant and addressed needs important for sustaining the Republic of Congo’s transition towards democracy, a free-market economy and social justice.

The Government and aid-community partners recognized a number of UNDP interventions as particularly valuable. Support to the formulation of key national documents related to poverty reduction included two national Human Development Reports, and, in close partnership with The World Bank, the interim and final poverty reduction strategy papers. UNDP also assisted the Government in producing the 2004 National MDG Report and the near final national strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. An innovative environmental programme supported conservation, alternative sources of energy and urban sanitation.

Effective advocacy engaged parliamentarians on a number of cross-cutting issues, such as gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment. Assistance in developing legislation, including on political parties and the role of women in politics, was backed by training for political party cadres and helping to establish networks promoting the role of women in politics.

Judicious use was made of high-visibility initiatives, such as the public burning of collected weapons to signal a return to normalcy across the country. Advocacy campaigns used the media, civil society and key institutions, such as Parliament, to promote a pro-poor agenda.

Surprisingly, the country programme did not address conflict prevention and recovery as a separate category of support. Although a number of activities fell under this programming theme, they were subsumed under the poverty reduction work. The programmes would have been more coherent if conflict prevention and recovery had been addressed either directly or through an approach that emphasized peace consolidation in all areas of intervention, particularly in governance. The UNDP country office adopted a new approach in an internal restructuring at the beginning of 2007, when it entrusted a dedicated Governance and Peace Consolidation Unit with management responsibility for governance and post-conflict projects.

Upstream and downstream interventions were balanced, while a degree of operational synergy was evident particularly in support to parliamentary institutions. Weak points arose in the limited inclusion of cross-cutting themes in the initial design of certain projects, although corrective action was generally taken.
Despite improving programme delivery, UNDP is still viewed as slow to disburse funds, deficient in reporting quality and heavily bureaucratic in management style. Available financial and human resources were not sufficient to undertake monitoring needed for on-demand programme adjustments or meaningful final evaluations, which weakened the capacity to illustrate results and justify donor trust.

Limited core resources made it difficult to use seed money to attract contributions for important but underfunded activities, particularly the environment programme. While the office developed an aggressive and successful fund mobilization strategy, some partners—among donors and within the Government—consider the emphasis on fund mobilization to be excessive.

Programme sustainability was a major concern. Numerous projects achieved generally positive results and produced pre-defined material outputs, but failed to produce intended outcomes or to develop mechanisms that ensure long-term result viability. In many cases, upstream support was successful in putting in place required policy frameworks or plans of action. Since expected outcomes will materialize over time, upstream efforts are sometimes referred to as ‘dormant successes’.

In contrast, the sustainability of downstream projects often depends on the availability of resources and capacities to maintain initial results. Since such resources and capacities were often absent, a number of projects, particularly those dealing with infrastructure rehabilitation, were destined for rapid deterioration.

UNDP needs to make a persistent and structured effort to foster national ownership. Concrete measures are needed to ensure that institutions and community groups have both the willingness and the capacity to take over long-term responsibility for programmes. In particular, new initiatives are required to cultivate increased government cost sharing.

UNDP has made judicious decisions in its programme interventions. To move forward in the country’s changing reality, it should question the continued relevance of post-conflict interventions. Peace consolidation, mainly through focused governance and community development interventions, represents a key requirement to move beyond the post-conflict period and the current stabilization phase. UNDP needs to do more to build on its comparative advantages in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The next country programme should build upon demonstrated UNDP comparative advantages: support for good governance, pro-poor and community development approaches, a regional approach to environmental issues and strong advocacy. UNDP should gradually phase out post-conflict activities.
- To ensure lasting stability and sustainable development, peace consolidation should become the central focus and underlying theme for most UNDP activities, particularly those in good governance and poverty reduction.
- UNDP should continue to emphasize links between upstream and downstream approaches.
- Based on experience in other countries, UNDP should engage the Government in negotiations aimed at increasing national cost-sharing contributions to at least equal the resources allocated by UNDP.
- Particular attention needs to be devoted to fostering national ownership and ensuring sustainability, such as through greater attention to sustainable exit strategies and intensified efforts in national capacity-building.
- In close consultation with all partners, UNDP should start to reflect on ways to improve coordination among development actors. This is of particular importance for good governance initiatives.
- UNDP should vigorously pursue its efforts to improve programme delivery. Measures rewarding staff efficiency should be established, and the new Centre for Project Execution and Support independently evaluated.
- The formulation of outcomes, indicators and means of verification should be improved. UNDP must ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are devoted to monitoring outcomes as well as outputs.
- The country office should engage partners in discussions geared towards improving the performance and efficiency of project review committees and steering committees.
- UNDP offices outside Brazzaville need to develop their services for both UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, including by creating open and inclusive coordination hubs at the local level.
- More attention should be given to mainstreaming gender and HIV/AIDS into the country programme.
- The intent to treat environmental concerns as cross-cutting should be encouraged.

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The political, social and economic context of Rwanda is profoundly affected by the civil war of the early 1990s and genocide of 1994. Whether considering demographic trends, issues of land ownership or penal-code reform, the background of devastation and horror impinges on the consciousness of all concerned. There is an unspoken assumption often underlying discussions of the nation's future to the effect that Rwanda cannot be considered an ordinary country.

UNDP support had five areas of focus: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, responding to HIV/AIDS, and environment and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2000 to 2006.

UNDP IN RWANDA

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TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2006: $28 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2006

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY PRACTICE AREA, 2004-2006 ($ MILLIONS)

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<tr>
<td>Energy and environment</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<td>Crisis prevention and recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achieving the MDGs, reducing poverty</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering democratic governance</td>
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</table>

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP had effective working relationships with the Government of Rwanda, which considered contributions to be very relevant. These were sometimes delivered with less than optimal efficiency, however, particularly in governance and environment programmes. The main problems were shortcomings in programme administration, management and financing.

In terms of the MDGs and poverty reduction, UNDP’s project portfolio in general moved ‘upstream’, towards supporting central and regional government institutions. Field-level UNDP interventions lacked data on results, but available information suggested these were relevant, if limited in impact.

Support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning was one of the largest UNDP interventions. Efforts to develop capacity in this ministry were fairly successful, and some UNDP initiatives, such as a project to transfer knowledge through ex-patriots, were innovative. UNDP support to the Ministry of Infrastructure to formulate a National Information and Communications Infrastructure Plan and e-Government Programme constituted important groundwork, though impacts were difficult to assess.

UNDP prepared the MDG Status Report of 2003 together with the Government. Its publication generated much publicity and helped raise national awareness of the MDGs. Since then, the MDGs have been present in the development dialogue, but not always in a systematic and organized manner. Key government documents still concentrate primarily on economic factors.

Disparate contributions in democratic governance were well targeted, and government stakeholders considered them particularly relevant. UNDP helped improve capacities of the justice system on multiple levels and move forward decentralization. It played an instrumental part in two successful national elections. It should continue to help the Government address ongoing challenges related to the promotion and protection of human rights, and could bolster existing support for the National Unity and Reconciliation Council by involving and empowering more young people as peace makers.

Despite a substantial portion of core resources devoted to HIV/AIDS, there was a lack of reliable data on UNDP results. Its comparative advantage vis-à-vis other UN organizations should be clearly elaborated.

UNDP made modest contributions to progress on environment and energy, backing the elaboration of strategies, but without contributing to their adoption or implementation. The Poverty Environment Initiative helped ensure that the Government’s emerging Eco-
nomic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy would centre on sustainable development. The initiative also provided environmental inputs into frameworks being developed for the strategy in agriculture, health, water and sanitation, justice, private sector development, social protection, environment, gender, social protection and HIV/AIDS. While this cross-sectoral analysis offered guidance for orienting these sectors, it was too early to assess development results.

Some impressive results occurred in areas where the Government of Rwanda was also relatively strong: aid coordination and gender mainstreaming. In the former, UNDP helped develop an aid coordination system, including by managing a basket fund for an Aid Coordination Unit. While gender-specific projects had an impact, however, there was little direct evidence that gender issues are systematically taken into account in other UNDP projects. A recent gender audit could help correct this anomaly.

Many UNDP contributions to helping government partners develop capacities were cited during the evaluation, but there was no systematic approach to capacity development or to measuring progress. UNDP’s decision to support the emerging National Integrated Skills Development Policy and a national capacity development strategy to be closely linked to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy was promising.

Overall, UNDP made progress towards a more sustainable long-term development approach, but several UNDP projects still played gap-filling roles. The dispersion of programmes across many small projects in multiple thematic areas impeded efforts to improve the quality of programme administration and technical expertise.

External factors that will greatly shape UNDP’s strategic environment in coming years are the new architecture of aid, including the ‘One UN’ approach piloted in Rwanda. Participation will place greater pressure on the organization to improve its performance and address areas of chronic weakness, such as human resource management, administrative and technical services, and monitoring and evaluation. Partners in and outside the UN system expect more clarity from UNDP on its role.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If environment is to be retained as one of two areas of focus for UNDP, then the country office needs to enhance its capacity to provide strong technical and policy support.
- UNDP should launch a dialogue with the Government of Rwanda with the aim of expanding UNDP partnerships with Rwandan civil society organizations.
- Project designs need to be based on initial analyses of problems and clear objectives defined together with stakeholders. The role of steering committees in project design should be clarified and strengthened towards enhancing national ownership and sustainability.
- UNDP needs to establish a robust, functional monitoring and evaluation system that systematically generates ‘lessons learned’ and ensures these are reflected in programme management and design decisions.
- National ownership and the sustainability of results should be strengthened by ensuring that on-the-job training and skills transfer activities figure prominently in all technical assistance. Autonomous project implementation should be replaced, where possible, with technical assistance that works directly within government institutions.
- The results of the gender audit should be used to raise the profile on gender in UNDP’s portfolio from an ‘incidental’ to a core issue. This should build on successful support to women politicians in Rwanda.
- UNDP should sharpen the focus of its programme, concentrating on areas where UNDP can bring the most value added while strengthening corresponding in-house capacities.
- UNDP should help the Government foster harmonization and alignment among development partners still pursuing the project approach. UNDP should explore the option of facilitating pooling of technical assistance.
- UNDP should focus on roles where it can achieve maximum coherence and synergies with the programmes of partner agencies.
- UNDP can help the Government enhance national and regional stability. For example, it should consider options for strengthening cross-border programming links that might help stabilize the Kivu region.
- UNDP should continue its support for strengthening the rule of law and decentralization. Enhanced ties with civil society organizations are needed to improve UNDP capacities in these areas.

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Despite successfully adopting a liberal democracy and competitive political institutions, São Tomé and Príncipe has experienced political instability characterized by frequent changes of government. Its economy, the smallest in Africa, still mainly depends on cocoa. New potential income from oil offers opportunities for socioeconomic development, while generating risks demanding transparent management and effective use of public resources.

UNDP has provided support on democratic governance; poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including through basic health services; and the environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2016.

UNDP’s programme in São Tomé and Príncipe produced tangible results, but with scope for further progress. In the area of democratic governance, capacity-building responded to the needs of public institutions. UNDP helped the National Electoral Commission improve the transparency and credibility of election results, the Parliament to build a new public information mechanism, and the Directorate General for International Cooperation to establish a tool for aid management and coordination. One key achievement was UNDP’s policy dialogue with the National Electoral Commission, which culminated in the first-ever triple ballot for parliamentary, municipal and regional elections.

Other assistance helped the Criminal Investigation Police improve the quality of its work, but the text of the Criminal Investigation Police Framework Law had not yet been examined by the Government, making it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion on making justice accessible to the most vulnerable.

Advocacy with the Government in tandem with other country partners led to the creation of the National Institute for the Promotion of Equality and Gender Equity in 2007 and the adoption by the National Assembly of a 30 percent quota for women in Parliament. But UNDP faced continued challenges in taking gender equality and women’s empowerment into account not only at the project and programme design stage, but also during implementation. No clear strategy spelled out how gender equality can contribute to accelerated development.

A direct contribution to the reduction of income poverty was not established. Interventions did progressively strengthen the capacity to make substantial progress in the achievement of the MDGs, including by ensuring that basic social needs were taken into account in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Work in the fight against endemic diseases was very effective, leading to reductions in malaria cases and the HIV prevalence rate. Testing for tuberculosis has become more widespread, and morbidity and mortality from the disease have fallen as a result of better treatment availability. These results cannot be exclusively attributed to UNDP, yet it made a significant contribution.

In the area of environment and sustainable development, UNDP helped integrate sustainable environmental management, climate change and disaster risk management into national development strategies and plans. The National Contingency Plan and the National Strategy for Preparedness and Response to Natural Disasters were adopted, and the National Council for Preparedness and Response to Disasters created. Better procedures for interinstitutional coordination for disaster risk management were defined, but without an approach to establish...
links between the macro-, meso- and microlevels. Some issues arose from a structural dependency on a single source of funding. Results at the district level were poor due to inadequate investment.

The programme was generally efficient. A multisectoral team was formed to support national implementing partners with procedures and practices for national implementation. Some weaknesses were due to poor synergies among interventions. Work financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria experienced certain problems relating to internal control and administrative and risk management processes, which were improved within acceptable timeframes. Recurring problems arose, however, with the late release of resources by the Global Fund.

Sustainability varied, for reasons including political instability, which complicated capacity building for national ownership and lasting results. Democratic governance projects had an element of sustainability since they were integrated into national structures and aligned with national policies. But the Government was not yet able to finance elections, and the renewal of the composition of the National Electoral Commission after each election resulted in a loss of capacity and reduced the impact of UNDP’s support. Varied and effective partnerships with civil society organizations, including national groups, were nonetheless limited to contractual relationships for implementation.

For programme design and management, teams of specialists operated by thematic area with insufficient coordination or integration across thematic areas. There was no process for interdisciplinary planning and execution of development initiatives. The definition of results for programmes was not based on a theory of change; a risk management approach was not used; and a monitoring and evaluation system was not in place.

One key observation was that UNDP management played an important role in public policy dialogue with government partners. As a result, situations requiring the political commitment of partners were resolved, and the logic of change inherent in the programme was strengthened. Overall, the UNDP country programme was strategic, relevant and resilient in a context of political instability. It was able to adapt to take into account emerging development issues, and suitably emphasized strengthened central administration capacities and the rule of law, and greater accountability for public services. Programme contributions would have further improved if the Government had a longer-term vision, such as a development plan for the next 15 to 20 years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Measures should be taken allowing specialist teams in the three thematic areas to work together in synergy as a strong team to advance innovative proposals for the planning and implementation of development interventions, and introduce cross-cutting working methods and interventions in order to promote intersectorality.
- UNDP should refocus its Country Programme and its areas of intervention in order to reduce dispersion and the segmentation of programmes and projects, and to allow it to embark on innovative poverty reduction processes.
- The policy dialogue should be continued with government partners with the aim of consolidating achievements and continuing to work together to strengthen democratic governance by placing the emphasis on judicial reform and support for the decentralization process; poverty reduction by focusing on the role of local authorities in partnership with non-governmental organizations in the promotion of income-generating activities; and environmental management that also contributes to poverty reduction.
- UNDP should make gender equality an integral aspect of its country programme in São Tomé and Príncipe from the design stage, during implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation.
- Greater attention should be paid to sustainability in the future programme. This will require the definition of suitable exit strategies and adequate capacity building of partner institutions.
- Partnerships should be strengthened with national non-governmental organizations, and the quality of these partnerships should be improved through a long-term plan, where possible, as well as through project exit strategies that take into account the continuity of their role.
- UNDP should design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system for its Country Programme in São Tomé and Príncipe to strengthen its results-based management.

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Senegal is among the least developed countries, and in recent years has experienced weaker growth than other sub-Saharan African nations. Agriculture remains the primary source of jobs and income for about 60 percent of people, a major challenge given an environment weakened by drought, deforestation and rapid urbanization. Significant reforms have been implemented in democratic and local governance and in the justice sector, but strengthening the quality of public service and the rule of law remains a challenge.

UNDP has provided support related to good governance, crisis management, poverty reduction, and the environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

UNDP poverty reduction projects in Senegal were well appreciated and often made a clear contribution. Many women benefited from specific outputs in microfinance and energy management. But contributions to poverty reduction were geographically limited. Each intervention operated in a compartmentalized manner, undercutting coordination and effective knowledge-sharing.

Support to various microfinance mechanisms and the financing of thousands of income-generating activities—either through direct financial and technical support, or by strengthening existing mutual savings banks and credit unions—was a resounding success. Projects reached the poorest groups, particularly people living with HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, the number, amounts and effects of the loans were not always well documented. UNDP also assisted the Government in developing the national microfinance strategy and Law No. 2008-47 regulating Decentralized Financial Systems. Microfinance was about 10 times larger than it was 15 years ago, reaching over a quarter of Senegalese families.

Sixty-two multifunctional platforms were installed in the regions of Tambacounda, Louga and Thiès. They were run by women-only groups for various income-generating activities. Nevertheless, 500 platforms had been planned. Their economic potential was not fully exploited.

Through UNDP support, Senegal took better account of the social dimension of development in national policy, particularly in the second- and third-generation poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). The MDGs were integrated into development programming documents. UNDP helped draft the National Gender Equality and Fairness Strategy, but the government structure in charge of implementation is relatively recent and appears to lack contacts within line ministries.

Slow or sometimes non-existent policy decision-making was a major hindrance to the governance programme. Several key studies were undertaken to reform public administration, but their recommendations remain unimplemented. UNDP has been instrumental in supporting the process of modernizing the judiciary. It helped introduce participatory planning of local development, a suitable funding mechanism similar to budget support for local authorities, the principle of local communities contracting out project delivery, work on local taxation practices, and other measures to strengthen the effectiveness and accountability of local officials.

Support for the environment and sustainable development has notably been used to demonstrate the importance of more participatory and decentralized environmental management through the creation of community nature reserves, and the inclusion of environmental
conservation in local development plans. Other assistance aided in restoring degraded lands, reclaiming salinized lands, opening firebreaks, reforestation, and protecting and managing forests. UNDP also supported the drafting of a proposed forestry taxation reform to promote sustainable management.

Crisis management interventions enabled progress in implementing a national programme to prevent and reduce major disaster risks. Mine action assistance supported the creation of the National Commission in charge of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the National Anti-Personnel Mines Action Centre in Senegal, the Commission’s operational body. Small-scale mine-clearing and awareness-raising activities in the Casamance region probably played a modest role in the noted decrease in anti-personnel mine victims.

UNDP interventions helped improve implementation of the principles of aid effectiveness, contributing to a better absorption of external resources. As coordinator of a broadened representation of UN agencies in Senegal, which increased from 16 organizations in 2000 to 23 in 2007, UNDP was increasingly involved in joint programmes. Programme disbursements between 2004 and 2009 more than doubled, yet without much development or strengthening of corresponding tools to manage joint programmes.

Dependence on external funds seemed to favour the multiplication of ‘pilot’ projects that all claimed to demonstrate the best approach to development. Some financial partners did not seek a model but rather expertise and on-the-ground presence to increase the impact of their assistance. Some ‘models’ are not integrated into national policy; others are too expensive and not likely to move beyond a demonstration stage. External funds were managed independently by each project, with few attempts at sharing roles, efforts and funds at the country programme level.

While overall UNDP support was aligned with international and national policies, it was undermined in practice by structural dependence on external financing. UNDP staff and donors rightly saw increased fundraising as an opportunity for creating new partnerships and a greater ability to intervene in the country. For their part, government officials saw it as a form of external dependency that undermines UNDP’s traditional positioning in relation to the Government, and reduces its ability to respond to priority needs in areas where external resources are difficult to raise.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should refocus its programming on the quality of the interventions that it supports rather than relying on their quantity. This requires that: headquarters should primarily base the performance evaluation of country offices on their ability to effectively contribute to sustainable development results rather than on their ability to raise funds; long-term support should focus on areas where UNDP has recognized expertise and functional networks to strengthen international partnerships and support progressive ownership of results by national stakeholders; UNDP should adopt a demand-based rather than supply-based approach to mobilizing resources; and UNDP should maintain a capacity to quickly mobilize expertise to respond to the requests of strategic national partners that go beyond the strict framework of ongoing projects and programmes.

- The organization should strengthen consistency between interventions, increase dialogue with national institutions and develop inter-agency collaboration. This involves the creation and continued support of spaces for dialogue on technical and policy issues within the country office; pursuing regular proactive dialogue with other UN agencies based on national needs; a better inventory of UN interventions; and moving towards integrating interventions under a national structure that establishes funding priorities and allocates funds.

- UNDP should strengthen its capacity to evaluate and report on progress towards desired outcomes. This implies a set of interventions in planning, the definition of indicators, project monitoring and audits on an annual basis, and harmonization of the UN Development Assistance Framework management structures with those of the PRSP. UNDP needs to ensure optimal use of staff skills, and strengthen staff at the strategic and operational level through continuous training and better use of knowledge networks.

- The UNDP country office should organize its programming around strategic thematic areas, including the environment, local development and governance, that provide a systemic and integrated vision of development.

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Seychelles has made remarkable social and economic progress, with advances on all social and economic indicators. Significant individual, institutional, financial and technical capacity has been established. But maintaining social achievements has put increasing strain on national finances, and economic growth has been based on unsustainable borrowing. The country has faced growing environmental and governance challenges.

UNDP programmes have supported environmental protection and sustainable energy development, governance, disaster response and preparedness, and, as a cross-cutting issue, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2009.

With a relatively high standard of living and high capacity, Seychelles has a reduced need for international cooperation, yet this remains important to a country that is a small island developing state. It is far from markets, highly dependent on imports and cannot appropriately diversify its economy. Like all international partners, UNDP faces challenges from working in such a context, including high overhead. But it built a large programme where a key strength was its continuous presence, unlike most bilateral and multilateral development partners.

UNDP support has generally been well aligned to national policies and priorities in the environment and governance sectors, and closely aligned with globally agreed priorities for development. In work on the environment, there were achievements in raising awareness, increasing understanding, and developing capacity through training, new tools and on-the-job learning. Major delays in the approval of funds and the start-up of interventions limited contributions, however.

The Government and UNDP set up a single project coordination unit for all UNDP-implemented Global Environment Facility projects. But many stakeholders felt that overall management capacity in government agencies and the Department of Environment declined, for a variety of reasons that could have included the inadequate anchoring of UNDP support in national institutions and plans. Project designs were based on substantive issues but missed proper assessments, partly because international forces drove the design.

In democratic governance, support to the Parliament and the judiciary was strategic, designed to respond to well-defined needs and well institutionalized. Through a series of catalytic and well-planned interventions, UNDP contributed to making human rights issues visible and more recognized as legitimate concerns. Sustainability and impact would probably have been strengthened by better coordination and institutionalization of activities with, for example, the Gender and Population Unit in the Social Development Department.

Other assistance sought to build civil society capacities to support vulnerable populations. But support was not based on an adequate assessment of the existing institutional context, since the Ministry of Health and Social Development already had a mechanism for supporting vulnerable populations via civil society that seemed to be functioning well.

UNDP helped build capacity to respond to disasters and manage risk reduction, working with the Department of Risk and Disaster Management. It responded effectively to the Asian tsunami, playing a key role in the coordination of resource mobilization and making a difference at a critical moment.
Certain cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and human rights, were addressed through project interventions, but not well mainstreamed throughout assistance. Support to parliamentarians and the judiciary did not address gender issues. UNDP also missed opportunities to build links across programme areas. Assistance to the National Human Resource Development Council could have helped develop capacity on the environment.

A general weakness was an incomplete understanding of capacity development. Notably, ongoing public-sector reform presented unique capacity challenges and opportunities that were not fully understood or exploited. In several cases, UNDP provided capacity development solutions that may have been more appropriate to other countries. Much of the capacity built was ad hoc or incomplete; training sessions often became general awareness-raising exercises.

Programme management was adequate for the size and complexity of the programme, but had certain weaknesses. The office did not seem to have the time or people to play a strategic advocacy role or provide substantive guidance on institutional or capacity development. The system of setting targets and indicators, monitoring performance, reporting on performance, and using monitoring reports to guide management decisions was very incomplete. Country programme documents bore little resemblance to the activities subsequently implemented.

A major focus of UNDP’s work was resource mobilization. It was very successful, but aligning to the strategic thinking of the concerned donor made it difficult for UNDP to be as strategic and influential as it might have been had it used its own funds. With the European Union, UNDP came on board as the implementer of activities already designed. In some cases, it added substantive value, particularly with regard to human rights, but was not in a position to make major changes.

Seychelles is now entering a new phase of development and renewed relations with the Bretton Woods institutions. As they support macroeconomic reform, financial management and overall public sector reform, it seems unlikely that UNDP can add value by directly intervening in these areas. But it can act in complementary areas, notably, in social sectors likely to be negatively affected and with vulnerable communities. UNDP can support its long-term partners to develop skills and tools to implement the reforms and make the best use of any opportunities emerging through them.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should develop a new approach to country programming in Seychelles. The country programme should respond more directly to national targets, should be fully embedded and owned, and should balance more equitably the forces driving UNDP interventions. As part of an overhaul of planning and programming, UNDP should also strengthen project planning and management.

- With respect to the ongoing public-sector reform process, UNDP has a role to play in the forthcoming country programme. UNDP should clearly define this role. This includes determining gaps and weaknesses in the reform process and then strategically positioning UNDP based on its comparative strengths.

- UNDP should support an institutional analysis and capacity assessment of the Department of Environment. This can be done as an integral part of the process of developing the third Environmental Management Plan of Seychelles, with finances from ongoing projects. This would include establishing indicators of capacity and capacity development.

- As part of the forthcoming country programme, UNDP should develop a clear strategy to guide its work with and its support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This may be based on a transparent analysis of the justification of supporting/creating NGOs to implement government policy or to address national priorities.

- In order to effectively implement the forthcoming country programme, UNDP should determine ways of strengthening its Seychelles office. If UNDP is to be more effective in socioeconomics and public-sector development and institutional strengthening in the country, it requires stronger capacity related to these issues as well as in advocacy.

- As part of the preparation of the next country programme, UNDP should explore a broader range of international development partnerships.

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Sierra Leone has gone through significant transition in the past 14 years, recovering from the brutal civil war that ravaged the country from 1991 to 2002. UNDP has provided assistance to democratic institutions; public sector reform, local governance and service delivery; access to justice and human rights; youth development and employment; finance for development and environmental cooperation for peacebuilding. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2008 to 2012.

Total Programme Expenditure, 2008–2012: $133.6 Million

Funding Sources, 2008-2012

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<th></th>
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<th>2%</th>
<th>22%</th>
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<td>Vertical funds</td>
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Programme Expenditure by Thematic Area, 2008-2012 ($ Millions)

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<th>Thematic Area</th>
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<td>Parliament and media</td>
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<td>Local governance</td>
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<td>Elections</td>
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Findings and Conclusions

UNDP has been a dependable, responsive partner in crucial sectors, playing a central role in the transition from a post-conflict to a development phase. Support to elections has been central and sustained, with the 2012 election setting a standard for peaceful, fair, transparent and credible polls. UNDP assistance to Parliament buttressed these gains and filled basic capacity gaps. Public sector reform and local governance activities focused on expanding capacities to reduce conflict, manage the equitable delivery of public services, and improve service delivery. Through review and rationalizing, civil service positions were reduced, and performance appraisal and modernized payroll systems were introduced.

At the local government level, UNDP, with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, backed fiscal decentralization, local level service delivery and the implementation of a cadastral programme to enable the more systematic application of property taxes. UNDP was the first donor partner to engage with the complexities of public administration reform and local development. This encouraged others to enter the arena, but a more strategic and cohesive approach would have enhanced programme effectiveness.

Support to the Human Rights Commission, work on women’s property rights and the passage of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act are among the indicators of UNDP’s successful support to a fair justice system and respect for human rights. UNDP established a track record of undertaking the first generation of projects, which were then funded by other donors. One example was the establishment of Sierra Leone’s first Legal Aid Scheme, which informed the development of the National Legal Aid Scheme and Legal Aid Act 2012. In 2011, the DFID-funded Justice Sector Development Programme took over responsibility for supporting the pilot of the scheme.

Since 2010, UNDP’s access to justice programme has prioritized legal support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Special ‘Saturday Courts’ were specifically mandated to consider cases. For passage of the landmark 2012 Sexual Offences Act, UNDP provided capacity-building support for parliamentarians, seconded drafting experts to the Ministry of Justice and conducted significant advocacy. UNDP has almost exclusively targeted the prosecution side of sexual and gender-based violence cases, however, rather than ensuring the free and fair application of due process.

Youth employment is a critical ingredient for con-
continued peace. While UNDP activities were relevant, a first-generation of projects to assist youth were scattered and poorly implemented. By 2010, the focus had shifted from employability to better linking training with business development and self-employment. Outreach to non-governmental partners, such as microfinance institutions, has been innovative, but there is a need to better monitor different partners, including towards considering replication and upscaling. UNDP helped the Government streamline its youth-oriented architecture and contributed to the development of the National Employment Policy, the Youth Employment Strategy and the 2012 Youth Report—the first of its kind. But programmes had a very limited impact on job creation.

Under the finance for development programme, UNDP contributed to some degree to coordination capacity, and took on the role of administrator of funds when sectors were fragile and capacities were weak.

The response to the UN joint vision priority of environmental cooperation for peacebuilding has been very modest, entailing a number of projects with finance from a variety of donors. These were designed to strengthen national capacities to mainstream environmental concerns into development plans and cope with natural disasters. UNDP collaborated specifically with the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Environment Programme and UN Habitat to address issues of biodiversity, land management, renewable energy and conservation, and tackle the nexus between housing and poverty. While projects were relevant, this area will require more concentrated and cohesive programming.

Donor funds largely drove UNDP programme priorities, leading to the spread of capacity and resources into areas not central to the transition, although some sharpening of focus in 2013-2014 augurs well. Insufficient attention was paid to careful programme and project design involving needs analysis and capacity assessment to ensure more relevant, targeted inputs in terms of capacity-building. Monitoring appeared spotty except for high-profile programmes such as elections.

UNDP provided operational support, such as salaries and physical rehabilitation of institutional facilities, that was crucial during early post-conflict recovery. But with a marked evolution towards a need for higher level technical assistance, it must be alert to the risks that could make it difficult to move into a more substantive role. Some stakeholders already believe that UNDP is lacking in terms of substantive guidance and policy content. Moving forward, it will need to acquire additional capacity to engage in sustained policy dialogue in priority areas.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- With the departure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, and given its track record and demonstrated results, UNDP should take on a lead role in the governance and security sector reform areas as an integral part of the One UN team.
- UNDP should also prioritize carefully and not spread itself too thinly. It should pay particular attention to transitioning from a programme that has provided operational support appropriate to addressing post-conflict needs, to one that focuses on the transfer and exchange of expertise and technology.
- The Resident Representative and the Country Director should take on higher profile advisory roles. The Country Office should have access to a team of senior advisers for this purpose.
- UNDP needs to urgently undertake an internal strategic analysis to determine key areas most likely to present threats to stability in the medium term and help devise preventive development interventions.
- In the access to justice sector, it is strongly recommended that UNDP supplement its current heavy emphasis on the prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence to improve access to justice more generally, thereby ensuring due process for both plaintiffs and defendants.
- In the critical area of youth employment, UNDP should collaborate closely with the International Labour Organization and other partners, and work on bringing together potential employers, the World Bank and African Development Bank as well as key ministries and commissions, to develop a more systematic and coherent strategy for the creation of jobs in the country while ensuring safety and standards.
- In order to consolidate peace and stability, UNDP should encourage the Government to further strengthen local governance and consider extending the pilot activities throughout the country.
- A clear internal policy should spell out measures to improve programme design, monitoring and evaluation.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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UNDP IN UGANDA

Uganda has made significant improvements in social and economic development in the past two decades. Regions affected by conflict are transitioning to recovery. There has been progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet Uganda also faces numerous challenges, which include tackling regional disparities in poverty, high population growth, strengthening the capacities of public management institutions and minimizing the effects of climate change.

UNDP assistance has covered the areas of poverty reduction, sustainable environment, democratic governance, and crisis prevention and recovery in a post-conflict and human development context. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2009.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2009: $79.9 MILLION

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contributions to national development results varied in Uganda. Programmes, implemented largely through government agencies, responded to various requests for support from the Government, and supported implementation of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan and policies on post-conflict recovery and human security. While achievements were significant in some areas, there were also missed opportunities.

In supporting governance, there was no comprehensive strategy, although some important interventions were provided. A large component of support was aimed at furthering transparency and accountability in government institutions. The increased visibility of institutions for transparency and accountability, the growing demand for accountability, action against law breakers at all levels and the increase in public utilization of the Inspector General of Government services indicated a positive change in institutional and societal values, ethics and attitudes towards rights. In more than one case, UNDP support to institutions was used as seed money, with other donors brought on board to widen support.

UNDP assisted Parliament in training administrative staff in management, and orientated parliamentarians to procedures and management issues. Training was also provided to enhance parliamentarians' understanding of cross-cutting development issues, harmonize working relationships across political parties and ensure participatory democracy. These interventions were perceived as timely by the Government, fostering a more tolerant and cooperative working environment.

Post-conflict recovery programmes saw mixed results. Assistance helped in operationalizing the policy for internally displaced persons and facilitating their safe return. There were promising reductions of small arms and light weapons in some areas. Engagement in northern Uganda policy discussions was not at the desired level, however. Links between post-conflict recovery and longer-term national development objectives were not effectively forged.

Uganda was one of the pilots for the humanitarian cluster approach; UNDP had the challenging task of leading the early recovery cluster, but was not effective in providing leadership. It did not achieve sufficient ownership or participation.

With few exceptions, UNDP appeared to place more emphasis on programmes than policy support in work on poverty reduction, although it did back the drafting of the Micro-Finance Deposit Taking Act, approved in 2003. MDG assistance was a key focus, aimed in large part at increasing national government capacities to
monitor progress. There was limited evidence to suggest that monitoring informed government decision-making, however. Some district MDG reports were developed, but UNDP did not adequately use other district-level programmes to enhance understanding of the MDGs. Further piloting of regional MDG reporting could have informed regional development and recovery plans, and the broader recovery and reconstruction processes.

Issues related to the environment and climate change did not receive adequate attention; links with poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods were weak. The integration of cross-cutting issues was modest. While different projects took measures to include women, the programme lacked a systematic framework to carry out gender analysis in order to guide programme design, and to implement or to monitor progress in gender relations.

Uganda’s significant budget support from the donor community comes with an expectation of capacity development. This was a clearly recognized UNDP programme priority, but with no common understanding of the parameters. Capacity development was not mainstreamed into programmes. There were no benchmarks for the gradual disengagement of UNDP support.

UNDP programme support would have made better contributions to results had strategic partnerships been developed with other agencies or had interventions been based on a careful analysis of ongoing support to the government from other agencies. In a context where 71 percent of development cooperation involves budget support, clearly thought-out interventions and partnerships directed at addressing critical gaps were lacking.

Programme management was constrained by several critical factors, including lack of adequately qualified staff, weak synergies among different areas of the programme, and poor reporting and monitoring. An evolving and complex humanitarian situation created additional responsibilities, and at critical junctures, UNDP lacked capacities to respond to evolving demands. Programme efficiency was undermined by spreading funds across a wide range of activities.

UNDP should continue to engage in priority areas where enhanced national capacity and ownership can produce significant strides. The organization needs to become more strategic in its focus. All programme interventions should be oriented towards informing policy formulation and providing technical support.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP interventions should support policy formulation and coordination in development and post-conflict recovery. There should be a systematic approach to engaging in policy and technical support for implementation.
- UNDP should enhance its support to attaining the MDGs in order to address regional disparities in poverty. UNDP should make a stronger commitment to address cross-cutting issues, particularly the MDGs, HIV/AIDS and gender. UNDP should consider supporting regional MDG reports.
- UNDP should take specific measures to integrate environment and climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue, particularly in poverty reduction and disaster management interventions.
- To make meaningful contributions to development results, UNDP should be strategic in using its resources and reduce the number of interventions. UNDP should develop a fund mobilization strategy to support programmes in critical areas. This strategy should include areas where UNDP would engage on a long-term basis.
- UNDP should no longer work on intervention-specific pilot projects. The pilot approach should only be used for integrated approaches at the district level and with interventions that are both mutually reinforcing across practice areas and are linked by measurable and common objectives.
- UNDP should clarify what is intended by capacity development and outline support parameters. There should be a clear framework for implementing and monitoring capacity development activities.
- UNDP should define the role it can play in coordination and systematically engage in coordination mechanisms.
- UNDP should be more proactive in advocating the human development dimensions of growth and poverty reduction. UNDP should extend continuous support to advocacy tools such as Human Development Reports.
- UNDP should strengthen its partnerships with NGOs and civil society. It should facilitate linkages among the government, the private sector and NGOs in engaging in post-conflict and development issues.
- UNDP should strengthen its presence at the local level, including through greater capacities in area offices.
- UNDP should substantially strengthen the results focus of the country programme.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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The United Republic of Tanzania is a stable, peaceful, parliamentary democracy, with a growing economy and rich natural resources. It remains one of the poorest countries in the world, however, and made uneven progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNDP has provided assistance related to democratic governance, capacity development, private sector development and trade, HIV/AIDS, crisis prevention and recovery, the environment and natural resource management, and energy and climate change. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2015.

UNDP has served as a critical member of the UN team in Tanzania, which has collectively supported the Government in achieving its development objectives. All UNDP programmes reflected the aspirations set out in UN and national development frameworks as well as the MDGs; UNDP responded as well to emerging needs. This was demonstrated by support to Big Results Now, an initiative developed to fill gaps in existing strategies in the key sectors of energy and natural gas, agriculture, water, education, transport and resource mobilization.

Through its strong relationship with the Government, UNDP established a solid foundation for supporting the country in achieving its national development objectives and the MDGs, and promoting values that advance human development. This relationship was essential in navigating discussions of sensitive issues among policymakers, such as on strengthened anti-corruption efforts, and accelerated achievement of the MDGs by supporting gender and human rights.

Capacity-building was embedded in all programme areas. This involved individual skills and knowledge building through training and workshops, training of trainers, and financial support to place UN Volunteers in important positions with partner institutions. Given institutional weaknesses, the use of the national implementation modality in many projects was appropriate, particularly in Zanzibar, where both financial and human resources were limited in all clusters. Through careful identification of sectoral ‘catalysts’, national implementing partners were in the driver’s seat, which promoted their ownership of processes and results.

UNDP particularly helped to strengthen national partners’ abilities to formulate sector-specific policies, including on climate change, disaster management and trade integration. It helped improve handling of organizational mandates, such as for the National Electoral Commission and Zanzibar Electoral Commission in delivering successful elections; the Attorney General’s Chamber in negotiating and regulating investment contracts in extractive industries; and the Ministry of Finance in improving aid coordination and management.

While elements of institutional capacity have been put in place, they are a means more than an end, and need to be continued and scaled up. Sustainability remained a concern in many programme areas. The reasons included structural weaknesses of institutions; competing mandates and strategies; project designs that lacked strategies for following and scaling up activities after project completion; and uncertainty about how positions staffed by UN Volunteers would be filled in the long term.

UNDP contributed to gender equality and women’s empowerment through the UN inter-agency group on gender. The group developed tools such as a checklist for gender mainstreaming for all UN thematic programmes.
working groups, which helped raise awareness about the need for consciously reflecting gender in programmes. In UNDP programmes, attention to gender was prominent in work on governance, but was limited overall. More attention was needed in the project appraisal process; setting gender-responsive indicators and strategies in project documents; and ensuring equal project participation and benefit-sharing among women and men.

In general, projects in all programme areas were efficient when thorough preparatory efforts were made before they were designed. Also important were synergies across projects and programme areas, which led to mutual reinforcement of objectives and means of implementation. Efficiency could have been greater, however, with critical issues arising around the timeliness of project start-ups; project oversight and reporting; stakeholder communication and transparency; and both the sufficiency and timeliness of funds disbursements.

Under the current UN Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP), each UN programme working group is expected to report outcome-level results, but very few reports were available at the time of the evaluation to systematically document UNDP’s progress and achievements. Other challenges in assessing performance included the lack of consistency in the descriptions of outcomes, outputs and indicators across programmatic documents, and the lack of clarity in the assignment of projects to each of the outcomes. With high staff turnover in the country office during the implementation of its Transformation Plan, limited data were available from the previous programme cycle. Knowledge management practices were relatively weak.

UNDP leveraged networks with external partners to meet its needs and implement programmes. It effectively used partnerships with professional networks in specific sectors, for example, for private sector development initiatives. Partnerships with non-State actors such as civil society and academic institutions backed implementation of projects on HIV/AIDS and the environment and climate change. Some collaborations did not fully materialize, however, such as efforts to involve civil society and the media in anti-corruption work. Consultation with development partners, including donors, during project design appeared limited, resulting in missed opportunities for engagement.

Exchange programmes and joint studies prominent in some programmes helped produce tangible results. South-South cooperation supported preparation of the Five-year Development Plan, integration of a budget system in the aid management platform and legal reform for anti-corruption work.

UNDP offers a number of comparative advantages in Tanzania. It has a long track record in facilitating policy-level discussions, strengthening institutional capacities, and forging relationships with technical partners and external networks. Moving forward, to further assist the country in overcoming capacity constraints that limit the translation of development goals into results, UNDP can strengthen how it works with development partners, aiming in particular for more programmatic synergy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• UNDP, with its strong partnership with the Government, is in a unique position to galvanize development efforts in Tanzania. UNDP should leverage this strength to continue developing its programmes based on national development needs and on its own mandates.
• To fully exercise Delivering as One, UNDP should strengthen its engagement with other development partners, including donors and UN agencies.
• While results of the UNDAP outcomes are collectively reported at UN level, UNDP should also strengthen its internal practice of clearly demonstrating its programme performance and results.
• Following the favourable results achieved in the internal gender exercise, the country office should continue with gender mainstreaming efforts and ensure full integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment components in all its programmes.
• For current and future projects, UNDP should work urgently to resolve the key efficiency issues identified in this evaluation and to establish a sustainability plan for projects implemented through the national implementation modality.

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Zambia has achieved growth rates averaging about 5 percent per annum and maintained a peaceful democratic environment. At the same time, serious development challenges include widespread poverty and high income disparity. Zambia is at the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that affects virtually all its citizens in a variety of ways, and places a tremendous burden on social and economic development. While being a resource-rich country, Zambia confronts serious environmental sustainability concerns, with projections indicating that the related Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is unlikely to be achieved by 2015.

UNDP has contributed to addressing a range of development needs, particularly in the areas of democratic and economic governance, environment and energy, and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2008: $50.9 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008**

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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2009 ($ MILLIONS)**

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**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, UNDP made several highly relevant contributions to development challenges in Zambia. Good progress took place in the fight against HIV/AIDS as a major threat to development, including through the combined efforts of the Joint UN AIDS Team and the National Aids Council. A decentralized, multisectoral and community-based response was developed, reaching all districts.

Some progress was notable in the area of democratic governance, although at slower rates than expected. Some governance projects were small in terms of financing, while others, such as the elections programme, were large and very demanding in operational terms. UNDP supported the Decentralization Secretariat, the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission and the Human Rights Commission. Decentralization policy, for various reasons not related to UNDP, stalled despite preparation of an implementation plan. UNDP helped the Human Rights Commission establish itself in five locations outside the capital, thereby making its services available on a wider scale.

Innovative approaches were introduced in the area of energy and environment, where UNDP was an important player. But some projects will not be completed on time, posing a risk that impacts will be compromised. The Microfinance and Poverty Reduction Project, which duplicated the approach of the Grameen Bank, was an example of an initiative relevant to Zambia, yet with questionable sustainability.

Sustainability issues were in fact frequent across interventions, linked to capacity in implementing partner institutions. UNDP could benefit from making a systematic assessment of successes and drawbacks in transferring technical skills.

A Strategic Policy Unit worked in close cooperation with national partners, and promoted central UN products and values. The work was upstream and the services useful. The MDGs have been integrated into Zambian monitoring and evaluation systems, and knowledge about them is widespread. Implementation of gender equality as a crosscutting issue was not effective, however. Planning and implementation processes lacked a systematic framework to carry out gender analysis, which is cardinal to the monitoring of advances.

UNDP did not always have the capacity to provide the robust, professional responses necessary to handle complicated and deep-rooted challenges. It overstretched itself and spread its resources too thinly, resulting in limited impacts. Daily work was not seen as consistently applying UN standards as operational tools for the stra-
The Government appreciated UNDP as a special partner, even as the extent to which departments effectively took ownership and leadership of UNDP-assisted activities varied. There was a high degree of continuity in UNDP’s work, and the organization was mostly responsive to new challenges that arose. For instance, it mobilized resources with five cooperating partners at very short notice for the emergency 2008 elections, which took place on the date required by the Constitution.

Cooperating partners also had a generally positive view, given the role of UN agencies in the Joint Assistance Strategy for Zambia, and the fact that sectors led or co-led by UNDP were critical development drivers. There was a perception as well, though, that UNDP is more a convener of meetings than a dynamic leader, and that it missed important opportunities to back development progress despite its special relationship with the Government.

UN reform moved forward slowly, with a limited number of coordinated UN activities, due to competition over resources, and different accountability systems that made pooling financial resources in joint budgets (virtually) impossible.

Partnerships with non-government and civil society organizations were weak, despite a fairly vibrant civil society movement that could contribute effectively to development results. Civil society partners recommended a specific partnership strategy to address critical emerging issues such as the devolution of powers to local governance structures.

In principle, UNDP is well placed to play a strategic role in Zambia, but more coordination and the readiness to engage actively and on a continuing basis with partners—and especially with the Government—on strategic issues would improve prospects for achieving development results.

More should be done in the planning stages to focus on areas with sufficient in-house resources and to concentrate on fewer practice areas. Ultimately, a greater willingness to invest in capacity allowing UNDP to take a dynamic leadership role in coordination would increase its strategic relevance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should concentrate its resources on fewer areas to better match the changing development cooperation architecture in Zambia. The current sectors are relevant to national needs, but a better focus within each thematic area could contribute to higher efficiency and impact.
- UNDP should build on demonstrated comparative advantages, but adapt its staff resources closely to the selected sectors and sub-sectors. It should maximize internal synergies.
- UNDP should focus on the upstream side of sector development. It should utilize its access to high-level expertise for sector policy analysis, and further develop strategies for sustainability in the various sectors, not limited to activities managed by UNDP, but also in looking at how to sustain development results over time.
- UNDP should effectively support aid coordination arrangements, and provide leadership that effectively engages all partners in areas where UNDP has a clear and demonstrated advantage.
- UNDP should take the initiative towards increased integration and collaboration within the UN country team. It is especially recommended that the organization, in close cooperation with other UN agencies, prepare proposals for a One UN Fund to pool financial and technical resources, thereby providing more effective responses to development challenges.
- UNDP should work more closely with stakeholders from Zambian civil society, not least with women’s organizations in the human rights area, and in the areas of energy and environment.
- UNDP should strengthen its capacity in developing evaluable results frameworks, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of development results within an outcomes-based approach.
- UNDP should develop a systematic and operational approach to capacity development at the institutional, organizational and human resource levels that is commensurate with results-based management and suited to Zambian conditions. The system should include a plan for capacity development as an integral part of all project documents and workplans, and incorporate operational and measurable indicators of progress.

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Sustained economic decline has left Zimbabwe with serious development challenges, including the decimation of public services. It has taken steps to recover, with some success, including through a process of political settlement and the adoption of a new Constitution.

UNDP has helped to address key economic and political challenges, including through retaining the flexibility to respond to emerging requests for support. Programmes have addressed citizen participation and good governance, economic management and pro-poor development strategies, and social sectors and livelihoods. The last focused primarily on UNDP’s role in managing Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria resources. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered the 2012-2015 period, while also taking into account previous support from 2007 to 2011.

UNDP’s programme was well-harmonized with national development priorities. It aided government efforts to stabilize the economy, such as through better management of debt and improved statistical capacities, although the national statistical office still faces data gaps. An intention to help advance strategies to achieve pro-poor development and the Millennium Development Goals saw limited progress at the district level.

UNDP’s governance programmes were significantly revised after the establishment of Zimbabwe’s Global Political Agreement and Inclusive Government. This led to a signature achievement: UNDP’s support to the successful formulation of the new Constitution, in particular through facilitation of the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee. A further contribution came through encouraging mutual understanding between civil society and the Government. Capacity strengthening of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission helped it become a functional body with an improved public image.

In general, however, a lack of government capacity to carry forward necessary steps such as legislative alignment to the Constitution may pose a threat to the sustainability of results. UNDP’s overall capacity development assistance was not implemented strategically across multiple ministries, agencies and commissions, as a foundation for long-term development effectiveness.

Work on environmental protection and sustainable development has been widely recognized for extensive engagement with community-based organizations on water management, a critical concern given persistent drought and flooding. Less was achieved on agriculture reform, which is not a traditional UNDP strength. Assistance related to land management and strengthening the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement, while highly relevant to the country’s economic and social development, yielded modest achievements. Measures to clear up land valuation and compensation backlogs and prepare for a land audit have laid a technical foundation for moving forward.

Various resilience-related efforts supported responses to economic, social and climate-related shocks, meshing well with national priorities. Peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives helped to increase individual community and government capacities and counter various drivers of conflict. The response to the Global Political Agreement encompassed putting in place a mechanism for national healing and social cohesion.

Disaster preparedness and risk reduction planning improved, but there is not yet an appreciable difference in the effectiveness of the government to avert, mitigate,
prepare for and recover from future natural disasters. Substantial steps forward will require considerably more financial support as well as legal changes governing land use, especially in flood-prone areas. UNDP’s support for a planned Resilience Building Fund should help to further improve the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities of at-risk communities.

Under UNDP’s stewardship of Global Fund of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria resources, there were major achievements on all three diseases and the health system was strengthened. Key interventions included upgraded health information management systems, the introduction of an Electronic Patient Management System and support to the Harmonized Health Worker Retention Scheme. Some concerns were raised about high management costs. Critical capacity gaps remain in the Ministry of Health and Child Care serving as principle recipient.

UNDP contributed substantially to national efforts to accelerate the equal participation of women, including young women and women from marginalized groups. The new Constitution incorporates 75 per cent of women’s demands, and removes several discriminatory provisions. Women have also seen improved access to finance and markets.

Overall, UNDP has made useful contributions in Zimbabwe. Collaboration played a key role, as UNDP was strategically positioned, through its close and long-standing relations with the Government, to coordinate interventions by a number of major international development partners.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should develop and implement with Government of Zimbabwe a transition strategy that ensures that the Ministry of Health has the capacity, human resources and system controls in place to take full management control as principal recipient of all Global Fund accounts in Zimbabwe by 2017.
- UNDP should position the Resilience Building Fund as the leading edge of a recalibration of the UNDP engagement in Zimbabwe, balancing the current emphasis on central government ministry capacity, with significantly greater engagement through pilot programmes at local government and community levels.
- UNDP should develop close linkages and synergies between its support on resilience and disaster management, and its support for environmental protection and sustainable development. UNDP should consider working with relevant government ministries to pursue additional Global Environment Facility funding that can reinforce and extend its planned resilience building work.
- While support to the operationalization of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should be a priority, UNDP should also carry out a situation analysis to inform future UNDP programming and strategies for peacebuilding and conflict resolution, to ensure this work reflects the changing circumstances in Zimbabwe.
- UNDP should consider whether an enhanced integrated results-based management programme could be used to establish broader capacity development goals that can drive institutional strengthening across the civil service, rather than through ad hoc, small-scale capacity building efforts showing minimal result. It should also consider phasing out general support for capacity building in the economic and financial management agencies.
- UNDP should follow up with the UN Department of Political Affairs and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to smooth the process for UNDP reengagement in providing technical support. Technical support for electoral process improvement is an area where UNDP has carved out a global strong reputation that can be well put to use in Zimbabwe.
- To improve its capacity building efforts concerning gender mainstreaming, UNDP should consider employing a gender specialist to work directly with the Women’s Caucus, the Gender Committee and forge effective linkages with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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ARAB STATES

ALGERIA
DJIBOUTI
EGYPT (2004)
EGYPT (2012)
IRAQ
JORDAN (2007)
JORDAN (2017)
LIBYA
MOROCCO
SOMALIA (2010)
SOMALIA (2016)
SUDAN
SYRIA
TUNISIA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
YEMEN
After the ‘dark decade’ of the 1990s, marked by political instability and economic stagnation, Algeria began a process of rapid recovery. A state of emergency was lifted in February 2011 and a vast programme of institutional, political and socioeconomic reforms launched. Today, living standards have improved, and Algeria has the second-largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa, although youth unemployment remains high.

Key UNDP programme areas have comprised governance, economic and social development, and protection of the environment. A serious interruption of support occurred in 2007, when UNDP headquarters in Algiers suffered a terrorist attack. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP assistance from 2009 to 2013.

UNDP’s activities were generally very relevant in terms of their goals, and can be credited with some conclusive results. Support to the justice sector helped it modernize working methods, including through new technologies for integrated judicial case management. UNDP built on earlier initiatives on seismic and industrial risk prevention with a project that contributed to a major new risk prevention and management policy in line with national legislation.

The organization has been recognized for projects implemented in remote regions where it is often the only international party, and for innovation. The Integrated Management Plan for Guerbès-Sanhadja project, for instance, is a flagship initiative in the Mediterranean basin for the introduction of innovative concepts in spatial and temporal dynamics of ecosystems, vulnerabilities of natural resources, payment for environmental services and returns on investment in wetland conservation.

The spread of UNDP interventions was broad, however, without an overall strategic theme, and effectiveness was moderate. Programmes did not generate large-scale or sustainable transformation; expected results were mostly not achieved in full. In large part this was due to activities being modified or early project closure. In some field projects, the quality of outputs was compromised by efforts to reach a larger number of beneficiaries without sufficient adjustments to human and financial resources. Steering and monitoring mechanisms did not last beyond the lifetime of the projects, making assessment of sustainability and transformative results difficult.

Programme approaches were not consistently relevant. Capacity-building, for example, was mainly carried out at an individual level, and even where it was institutional, significant changes in institutional functioning generally did not result. One exception was the significant decline in anti-personnel mine accidents following the introduction of new mine clearance techniques to the Army.

UNDP’s contribution in the area of women’s empowerment and gender equality was moderate. An approach centred on integrating women in development did not focus sufficiently on questions of equality and the removal of discriminatory barriers. Through a joint UN programme on gender equality, UNDP did support a series of studies and assessments on specific aspects of the status of Algerian women that contributed to greater awareness in key institutions, including the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women’s Affairs. It can play a unifying role in national efforts towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

While UNDP successfully built partnerships, results varied. Intersectoral partnerships were often not adequately institutionalized, and the commitment of civil society and the private sector remained weak. In some cases, UNDP was successful in brokering partnerships...
among central and local institutions that were not used to working together. The mine action project encouraged partnerships between local authorities, local associations and the population, for instance, backed by advocacy around the benefits of coordination. One result was local associations working with the Ministry of National Solidarity to second state psychologists for victim assistance.

UNDP showed an adequate capacity to adapt to emerging priorities, although more so in a strategic sense than in projects on the ground. At the Government’s request, it worked on themes that do not traditionally fall within its areas of expertise, such as the financial market and an industrial strategy. It introduced new training courses for members of Parliament, particularly women, following the 2012 elections when a record number of women were elected.

In many cases, however, UNDP is still considered primarily a source of technical support or a simple service provider. While tangible efforts have been made to promote South-South cooperation, these have not yet produced convincing results. UNDP focused primarily on supporting government programmes and policies, without bringing any substantial added value on important themes such as governance and human rights.

Performance and the sustainability were negatively affected by a range of factors, including the consequences of the 2007 terrorist attack. Other constraints were poor internal capacity in results-based management, administrative complexities and delays in implementation; the absence of an exit strategy to sustain results; and inadequate communication and visibility. Even when taking into account the interruption of at least two years as a result of the terrorist attack, projects have run far behind schedule (by one to six years).

After the 2007 attack, restarting activities was an achievement in itself for UNDP. While UNDP has contributed to some progress since then, changes need to be more sustainable. UNDP can capitalize on lessons learned to improve its position, and demonstrate greater leadership, neutrality and independence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Focus UNDP activities on a limited number of themes within a strategic vision adapted to the specific features of the country. These themes should be identified in a participatory manner on the basis of criteria including, in particular, the comparative advantages and added value of UNDP for Algeria.
• The Country Office should be a force for innovative proposals, focusing on transversal themes and promoting intersectoral working, alongside pilot projects in the field. This can be done by strengthening and reorganizing existing skills or by drawing on others, particularly in the area of policy advice.
• Put the neutrality and independence of UNDP to good use, bringing in partners who until now have been little involved (notably universities, research centres, civil society, the private sector), and acting as interface and coordinator for public institutions.
• Integrate inclusive approaches (to reach disadvantaged, disabled or vulnerable people) in the planning of all activities. Furthermore, the Country Office and partners need to strengthen their capacity to integrate a gender perspective in all phases of forthcoming projects, including in their terms of reference.
• Strengthen the sustainability of UNDP’s results by systematically preparing exit plans and takeover or scale-up strategies, identifying alternative sources of funding from other donors or the Algerian Government.
• Close old projects more quickly and develop and implement new activities aligned to the new Country Office strategy.
• Strengthen the national appropriation of activities by more carefully defining the needs of stakeholders and implementing the National Execution of projects.
• Ensure greater visibility of the results achieved by UNDP activities, including a budget line for communication in each project. The communication efforts adopted by the new Country Office management team must continue, to publicize results and also to help to identify synergies with partners in future programming.
• Results-based management should be institutionalized further within the Country Office and partner institutions.
• Improve operations within the Country Office in order to lessen the impact of bureaucracy and reduce response times for recruitment, payments, preparing terms of reference, etc.

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Despite a high-quality harbour astride the entrance to the busy Red Sea shipping lanes, Djibouti has few natural advantages. A harsh desert climate results in minimal agricultural capacity and high rates of food insecurity; the country also faces chronic water shortages. Poverty levels remain stubbornly high and income distribution highly skewed, even with promising economic growth in recent years.

UNDP’s assistance has focused on a range of government programmes related to poverty reduction, including environmental sustainability and crisis recovery, as well as governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2012.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2003-2012: $11.4 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2003-2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2003-2012 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2003-2012 ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Most UNDP programme activities were highly relevant, and aligned with Djibouti’s development priorities as they were carefully framed within a poverty reduction strategy that UNDP supported since its inception. Effectiveness was considerable among activities aimed at poverty reduction, crisis recovery, improved environmental management and addressing HIV/AIDS, but less so in the governance programme.

In the arena of microfinance, UNDP helped develop a strategy for the sector, and supported the creation of a legal, regulatory and institutional framework as well as a regulatory group in the Djibouti Central Bank. A number of savings and credit societies were set up. Management tools, including operations handbooks, accounting procedures and business plans, were put in place. These actions have helped strengthen the credibility and financial viability of microfinance, and allowed micro-loans to become widely available. The number of beneficiaries rose from 1,200 in 2008 to 11,500 in 2011, more than 80 percent of whom were women.

UNDP support to the National Initiative for Social Development (INDS) drew on national experiences with an earlier poverty reduction strategy, where the worsening condition of vulnerable people was not visible because of the lack of coordination, monitoring and reliable data. Assistance helped create a permanent technical secretariat for the INDS, where international and national experts produced an action plan for 2008-2012, approved by the Council of Ministers, as well as instruments for implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Substantial improvement was made in the production and publication of statistical data, although Djibouti still faces the ongoing challenge of gaps in the supply of suitably trained statisticians.

On the environment and adaptation to climate change, UNDP has emerged as the Government’s key interlocutor among international partners, with a valuable role in resource mobilization, most notably for the Day Forest and the emerging Marine Protected Areas project. The Day Forest initiative was well integrated within a broader development objective, delivered through the Ministry of Agriculture under a programme focused on improving resource management among local communities. Gains at Day Forest, however, can only be consolidated over the long term if they are accompanied by an affordable long-term source of water to meet the multiple needs of local users.

Other achievements included helping the National Assembly become better equipped to fulfil its role of supervising the executive, such as through strengthened operational capacities and a communications programme. UNDP support for judiciary reforms backed remarkable strides that will likely last over the longer term. These encompassed a variety of institutional reforms in the court system, the coding and harmonizing of legal and regulatory texts, the reorganization of the Ministry of
Justice, and steps towards better alignment with international standards in the prison system. A National Human Rights Commission was created and a three-year action plan put in place toward identifying international human rights instruments and meeting their obligations.

Areas of chronic difficulty included the monitoring and evaluation of national programmes, and decentralized development. Challenges in the latter comprised the lack of local financing mechanisms and capacities, and inconsistent political support. UNDP neglected an opportunity to promote the private sector and its capacity to generate jobs, despite the strong link between poverty and unemployment. Programmes did not fully address social and environmental sustainability, which requires cross-cutting approaches, use of integrated strategies and enhanced capacity development. Gender, environmental sustainability and HIV/AIDS were often treated in isolation rather than being consistently integrated across programmes.

UNDP was partially effective in aid coordination and improved its support to the Government in this area. Perceptions of results among other international partners, however, may be unduly critical. This relates in part to unrealistic estimates of what is possible in the Djiboutian context and to comparisons with other African countries with more elaborate, effective aid coordination structures. Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacities, within UNDP programmes and among government partners, could improve capacities for aid coordination.

Direct resource mobilization results from 2003 to 2011 were modest but significant, exceeding the value of core resources in each period. Results were more significant for downstream activities on post-war recovery, decentralization and environmental sustainability than for upstream activities, although significant indirect resource mobilization came through UNDP catalysing support for the microcredit programme. Some government partners expressed disappointment in UNDP’s resource mobilization results. Some may have unrealistic expectations of what is possible, generated in part by UNDP’s propensity to overstate its capacities for aid mobilization.

Coordination within the UN country team was hampered by competition among team members. Yet there was appreciation for the UN Resident Coordinator as a high-profile and effective spokesperson for the United Nations in Djibouti and the region. The UNDP office provides an anchor for the UN team in Djibouti, and promotes proactive approaches to critical issues including gender, decentralization and support for the INDS process.

For the most part, UNDP has positioned itself well in Djibouti. But it is challenged by insufficient resources to take advantage of its positioning. Success with resource mobilization for downstream activities, even with UNDP’s considerable comparative advantage in supporting upstream, policy- and strategy-oriented activities, has justified a presence in both, overstretching country office capacities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement a carefully selected mix of upstream and downstream activities.
- Reduce the proliferation of thematic scope of UNDP programming in Djibouti.
- Maintain focus on well-defined areas of concentration.
- Reduce presence in areas where UNDP has been catalytic in the past and other players have now come on board.
- Carefully analyse programming areas with chronic problems before making any further commitments.
- Help the Government achieve potential synergies between effective aid coordination and effective monitoring and evaluation.
- Support aid coordination while contributing to promoting more collaboration among government partners.
- Support resource mobilization efforts by highlighting Djibouti as a peaceful role model, regional hub and strategic entry point to a dynamic region.

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Egypt’s structural reforms of the 1990s led to rapid rates of growth reaching 6 percent by the end of the decade. But these achievements must be viewed within the context of the challenges that Egypt still needs to address, notably unemployment and poverty. Further, while Egyptians enjoy higher levels of political freedom than in the past or in many other Arab countries, progress in this area has been hindered by practices that continue to obstruct full political participation.

UNDP has provided programmes on pressing issues related to poverty, gender disparity, environmental protection and governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2003.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME ALLOCATIONS, 1997-2006: $165.9 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government cost sharing</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other funds</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bilateral/multilateral donors</td>
<td>16%</td>
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</table>

**PROGRAMME ALLOCATIONS BY THEMATIC AREA, 1997-2006 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Policy/advocacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/miscellaneous</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>31+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job creation</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP has been highly effective in positioning itself at the centre of critical links that often lead to institutional transformations needed for development. A major component of the organization’s strategy involved backing the generation of new information about social problems and situations that hinder development. Resulting public awareness has spurred demand for change, including new institutional arrangements to deal with problems such as rural poverty, gender disparity and local development. An important lesson was that UNDP can and should play a proactive role in triggering processes of change to induce demands for policy innovations. While this carries political risk, not doing much about what matters also carries risk.

National Human Development Reports, partnerships with the media and a social marketing initiative were among the advocacy efforts that raised public awareness. The reports in particular responded to the basic needs of a large portion of the population—the poor and those living in small villages. After the first National Human Development Report highlighted geographical disparities, all 26 governors agreed on a 21-point declaration endorsing sustainable development. A monthly meeting was institutionalized involving all governors and line ministries under the auspices of the Prime Minister.

An emphasis on local development as the preferred level of government to deal with basic issues of poverty and governance has been an appropriate strategy for Egypt and UNDP. The organization made several significant contributions to medium- and long-term decentralization. It also conducted important projects that included training judges, prosecutors, police and journalists on human rights; enhancing the technical capacity of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood; assisting the institutional development of the ICT sector; supporting programmes on HIV/AIDS; and aiding the National Council for Women in efforts to increase the percentage of women in Parliament.

Partnerships with other donors, multilateral partners and stakeholders to address somewhat politically difficult issues not only brought resources and technical expertise, but also provided institutional strength and legitimacy. One example involved convening multiple donors to support the Ministry of Planning with the Northwest Coast Development Plan. The process included a shift in the approach to mine clearance so that it was seen as a development priority and not just a military exercise.

The last 10 years witnessed a profound transformation in the way UNDP finances its operations, with a very fast reduction in core financing. The counter-balancing pro-
cess has been one in which non-core resources mobilized from the Government, donors and other “third parties” have grown quickly. This testifies in part to UNDP’s supply of “good” initiatives and to the demand for those by the Government and the donor community.

At the same time, while the reduction in core financing has not really hurt the programme in Egypt—and may even have had an unintended incentive to generate more non-core resources—a minimum of core resources, in absolute and relative terms, is indispensable. This is required in particular to deepen some key programmes where UNDP has a comparative advantage and a certain independence.

There is little question that Egypt has to seek its own “endogenous” sources of growth within its available resources. Regional, local, village, social and fiscal development in particular offer the opportunity to increase economic and social welfare by applying basic principles of decentralization and subsidiarity to all public-sector activities. This is also the way to better integrate the country and to give it more political cohesiveness. Poverty reduction and better income distribution are other long-term priorities. Both depend on sustainable job creation and the effectiveness of public expenditure on basic education and health. The key guiding principle is that public resources and subsidies should go to consumers of these public goods, instead of to the suppliers of the inputs of those goods.

Enhancing the effectiveness of public expenditures may be even more difficult than raising additional resources, yet that is where a sustainable solution lies. UNDP could support institutional research programs in these areas by building upon the experiences of other countries that have embarked in this domain. While raising public awareness is an initial step in creating a proxy for public demand for institutional change, it is important to deepen understanding of the complex issues underlying the right supply and institutional responses.

In 2001, UNDP underwent a significant reprofiling exercise aimed at creating an internal culture and associated business processes to enable a more focused and higher impact programme portfolio. Resources were strategically targeted to areas where UNDP could make a discernible difference. The office is now positioned to sustain and perhaps even deepen its unique contribution to Egypt’s development by using its comparative advantages, and leveraging and aligning resources with other key donors.

Moving forward, UNDP needs to factor increasingly difficult global and regional conditions into its short- and medium-term plans for policy-making. If these challenges become serious, they could compromise many advances of recent years. This context needs to be seen as an opportunity to deepen some structural reforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organize a seminar with the national authorities and with the 26 governorates plus the city of Luxor to discuss in depth the findings of the seven governorate-level HDRs that will be finalized in 2003. This would also provide an opportunity to further discuss local-level planning initiatives such as the Decree of Qualyubia Governorate.
- Further support the remaining 20 governorates to produce HDRs.
- Support “Governorates Seminars” as a forum for informal but technical exchange of information and experiences on decentralization issues. A participatory process would provide valuable guidance on how to proceed and would make use of innovative experiences such as El Fayoum as referred to in the report.
- Commission an external and independent evaluation to formulate a diagnostic on the current decentralization framework, identify the main restrictions limiting a stronger local and regional development, and make policy recommendations to strengthen local and regional development.
- In line with the overall activities centered on local development, the EHDR 2004 should concentrate on decentralization.
- Undertake a pilot program to reform/modernize selected public administration institutions/departments to serve as models.
- Reach agreements with the national government to enhance decentralization policies and studies and “pilot” local development experiments.
- Work informally with governorates to explore ways in which some decentralization experiences can be scaled up into the public sector at large.

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EVALUATION BRIEF  JULY 2012

UNDP IN EGYPT

Egypt has made substantial economic, social and development gains, but significant challenges remain, from the inequitable distribution of wealth to inadequate opportunities for youth. While the political and social upheavals of 2011 to 2012 raised hope for reform and justice, the long transition period has intensified existing problems.

UNDP has focused its support on reducing human poverty, fostering democratic governance, and managing energy and the environment for sustainable development. In 2011, in the wake of a popular uprising, it adopted an interim plan, “Supporting Egypt’s Transition to Democracy, 2011-2012.” The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2011, with a focus on the planning cycle that began in 2007.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2011: $349.9 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilateral/multilateral</th>
<th>Programme government</th>
<th>Regular resources</th>
<th>Vertical funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2011 ($ MILLIONS)

- Crisis prevention and recovery: 0.5
- Environment and sustainable development: 20
- Poverty reduction/achieving the MDGs: 55
- Other: 101
- Democratic governance: 173

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contributed to Egypt’s key development priorities. Country engagement was strong, with 82 per cent of UNDP’s 2011 budget coming from government cost-sharing. The prevailing government view was that partnership with UNDP enhanced opportunities to secure international funding and obtain high-quality technical support informed by international best practices. In its broad portfolio, UNDP has demonstrated that it can provide both strategic upstream advice and effective downstream programme management.

A broad array of stakeholders cited UNDP-assisted national human development reports as influencing national policy. The 2005 report, with its focus on ‘a new social contract,’ was considered a breakthrough in opening public discourse on tackling regional economic disparities and pockets of poverty, especially in Upper Egypt. UNDP’s work on Millennium Development Goals monitoring has been highly relevant, generating five updates widely recognized for their thorough analysis of progress on the goals.

UNDP has served the Government as an incubator and strategic adviser for new institutions and initiatives. The Social Fund for Development, for instance, started in 1991 as a UNDP project to provide a social safety net for vulnerable groups. It has since evolved into a large, quasigovernmental fund focused on micro-, small and medium-size enterprise development and job creation, garnering more than a billion dollars from donors. The Economic Research Forum, initiated as a UNDP project 15 years ago, is now a leading research institute in the region, influencing policymaking not only in Egypt, but in other Arab countries, Iran and Turkey.

A highlight of UNDP’s work on poverty reduction has been its support for strategies to fight poverty through information and communication technology. Five interrelated projects on illiteracy eradication, community knowledge/e-library, community portals, smart schools and a mobile Internet unit sought to stimulate awareness of the benefits of ICT, and to make ICT more accessible and affordable for all citizens. Results included expanding access to education through e-learning for over 1 million citizens. A close partnership with the Ministry for Communications and Information Technology engaged diverse other government entities, including the Ministry of Health and the Postal Authority, as well as the private sector.

Efforts to promote a culture of human rights in Egypt were highly relevant but had little impact. UNDP established partnerships with government and government-sponsored human rights organizations to enhance their operational, administrative and technical capacities. These efforts were carried out in a generally satisfactory
manner; nevertheless, they were insignificant in countering the simmering public dismay and frustration over a perceived lack of appreciation for human rights. One capacity-building initiative expanded awareness and respect for human rights among the judiciary, police and prison wardens, although with no follow-up assessments, it was unclear if this had any subsequent impact on the views and actions of participants.

UNDP actively promoted women’s empowerment and gender issues across its portfolio of programmes, and through its own hiring and human resources. But progress on women’s empowerment has stalled and is in danger of regressing. Efforts to boost women’s participation in political systems, for example, have run up against obstacles such as the setting aside of electoral quotas.

UNDP has helped to better articulate a national decentralization strategy and develop capabilities to implement it. A collaborative effort triggered a constructive national policy dialogue—involving national government officials, local authorities (especially governors), academia and the donor community—on how best to empower local governments. Ongoing capacity-building assistance for the Ministry of Local Development and local councils focused on increasing their capabilities to implement the decentralization process. A Coordination and Decentralization Support Unit was in place, overseeing project implementation and donor funding. By 2009-2010, nearly LE 4 billion for service delivery implementation had been delegated to governors, predominately in the local development, housing and education sectors.

UNDP also showed that it can provide effective technical assistance to local governments on capacity-building, planning support and progress monitoring for improved service delivery. It was less successful in helping to scale up and replicate piloted decentralization approaches, with missed opportunities, for example, to learn from a pilot on fiscal decentralization. Efforts were constrained by a lack of systematic attention to resource mobilization, and the dominant position of national political actors in setting project strategies and direction. Another gap related to limitations on direct citizen engagement, imposed in part by the fact that local popular councils are elected, but governors govern at the discretion of the President.

UNDP did not play a significant role in disaster or conflict prevention and recovery, even during the 2011 uprisings. Discrete conflict prevention and recovery interventions included landmine clearing in the North West region, and support to the Cairo Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa.

By contrast, a large and varied environmental project portfolio built on the successful mobilization of substantial resources, especially from the Global Environment Facility and bilateral donors. UNDP has had a measure of success in prompting the Government to better address critical environmental issues, such as by assisting in the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Improving Energy Efficiency. Among many other results, this led to the adoption of standards for compact fluorescent bulbs and their introduction to the Egyptian market.

The UNDP transition strategy noted the opportunities and challenges presented by the political transition, and identified priorities in response to national circumstances. These include supporting expanded and effective political participation, supporting greater transparency and accountability, promoting a culture of human rights and enhancing access to justice, and supporting local development, poverty reduction and social justice.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should expand its support to local governments and urban communities, emphasizing integrated planning and community participation, and focusing on economically disadvantaged communities.
- UNDP should engage with the Government of Egypt in a renewed effort towards civil service reform, especially in support of government efforts to tackle corruption and promote transparency and integrity.
- UNDP, together with its UN and national partners, should continue to promote the empowerment and participation of women in Egypt, and should focus special attention on opportunities for technical training.
- UNDP should enhance its support in the area of environmental protection by helping the Government of Egypt to replicate and upscale successful pilot projects. In particular, UNDP should focus increased attention on energy efficiency and land degradation issues.

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Until two decades ago, Iraq was highly regarded for its public sector management, effective growth strategy and social welfare programmes. Years of war and international isolation subsequently led to deteriorating infrastructure and underinvestment in public services. Since 2008, rapid economic growth and improvements in services have substantially reduced income poverty, but not without significant inequalities. Weak legal mechanisms and widespread corruption constrain development.

From 2008 to 2010, UNDP focused on governance, and economic recovery and poverty alleviation initiatives. Starting in 2011, programmes sought to foster inclusive participation; strengthen accountable and responsive governing institutions; promote inclusive growth, gender equality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and Millennium Development Goal achievement; and restore foundations for development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2008 to 2014.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2013: $377.7 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2008-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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**PROGRAMME BUDGET BY OUTCOME AREA, 2011-2014 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthened participatory mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced rule of law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountable and transparent governance</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy frameworks for economic recovery</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to pro-poor strategies</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Through its programmes, UNDP delivered tangible benefits in terms of strengthened policies, legislation and institutional capacity. Its flagship support for elections achieved considerable results, helping to establish the Independent High Electoral Commission as a self-sufficient and participatory mechanism. Under the access to justice and human rights programme, the Ministry of Interior strongly supported the Family Protection Units that provide police and legal assistance to women, children and families to respond to domestic disputes.

Efforts to enhance the rule of law in the federal system encountered questions around sustainability, but in Kurdistan, where the Regional Government welcomed the modernization of its judiciary, future prospects are more promising. The numbers of judges and cases in criminal courts have increased, although there is little evidence of greater court efficiency, reduced case backlog or increased public confidence in the justice system.

Programmes assisting with policy frameworks for economic recovery were challenged by an absence of coherent demand from the Government. Economic trends have been towards further concentration of economic activity in the state, driven by a rapid increase in the oil sector. In this context, there was limited progress towards economic diversification and private-sector development, even though these were key elements of successive national development plans.

UNDP programmes to support pro-poor strategies, while relevant, focused on localized recovery activities and were not consistent with an overall orientation around policy and institution-building. Recovery projects made tangible contributions to the restoration of public services and infrastructure, such as through the doubling in the use of two hospitals after they had been rehabilitated. The local area development programme contributed to strengthening planning systems at the governorate level and to building vertical linkages between governorates and the regional and federal planning frameworks. The contribution remains unique; ongoing insecurity and the declining international presence in Iraq mean that few if any international organizations are working on governance issues at the governorate level.

UNDP took on complex topics such as inefficient delivery of basic services, abuse of the public trust by civil servants and the need to ensure that capital investment expenditures addressed real needs. All of these
are relevant to the challenges Iraq faces, yet an emphasis on grand programme designs meant that some were too theoretical to yield tangible results, and did not take practical constraints into consideration. Gender equality did not receive adequate priority.

Some programme models were not sufficiently customized to the local context, which undercut national ownership as well as effectiveness and sustainability. For example, the peace and reconciliation projects applied a western reconciliation method that was rejected by local stakeholders. UNDP showed improvement over time in adapting programme models to Iraq, but the lack of initial adaptation had significant impacts. Since 2008, UNDP has aimed to shift its programme focus from reconstruction and recovery to development, and from a project-based approach to a more coherent and strategic programming approach. This coincided with deteriorating security conditions and a sharp reduction in resources. Yet due to a lack of strategic leadership during a crucial transition period, programmes operated relatively independently, and synergies were not pursued. A preoccupation with fundraising led to some isolated projects that, while good in their intentions and hence marketable, were too small and ad hoc to create much discernible impact. Further, UNDP pursued programmes even when political support was lacking, when there were political and reputational risks, or when the lack of delivery resulted in a loss of credibility.

An important consequence of operating under security restrictions is that programme implementation focused on support primarily to the central Government. Several programme areas would have benefited by broadening their focus to the provincial and district levels.

UNDP’s programmatic collaboration with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) was weak, which undermined activities in some areas. The comparative strengths that UNDP usually exercises in the United Nations country team were overshadowed, sometimes with justification and sometimes without.

Though UNDP has increasingly been counting on sharing the cost of programming with the Government, officials seem not fully convinced of the value of shared expenses. For its part, the Government has often not clearly articulated what it wants from UNDP. Attaining the status of a trusted development partner through enhanced interactions with the citizens and the Government of Iraq may be a priority in re-establishing UNDP’s comparative strength as a leading UN development agency.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should consolidate its programme support, ensuring that it has adequate scope and depth to address the key development challenges confronting Iraq. UNDP should move away from funding-driven, low-impact activities.
- UNDP’s future relevance will depend on establishing strong development partnerships with the Government and people of Iraq. UNDP should make it a priority to develop and sustain partnerships with national counterparts.
- UNDP should develop adaptive strategies that will continue to contribute to Iraq’s development under different and evolving political and security scenarios, particularly the challenging security context of central and south Iraq.
- UNDP should ensure the appropriate balance of programme support between the national and governorate levels and should strengthen the synergies between programmes at the two levels.
- UNDP programmes need to prioritize promoting gender equality. The lack of a conducive environment cannot justify inadequately pursuing programmes that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- UNDP should strengthen its own technical and advisory capacities. UNDP should review programme management and should develop an appropriate strategy to respond effectively to Iraq’s development needs.
- Recently, the importance of UNDP’s mandate in integrated peacekeeping missions has been increasingly recognized. UNDP and UNAMI should draw lessons from countries where close coordination between UNDP and the integrated mission has been mutually beneficial and has enhanced their contributions to peacebuilding and development. UNDP and UNAMI should make concerted efforts to solve disagreements regarding their roles in the area of governance.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide. See the full reports at the Evaluation Resource Centre, erc.undp.org
Jordan has made significant development progress, achieving macroeconomic stability and transforming the structure of its economy—now one of the strongest in the Arab region. The country has also intensified its efforts to make human development a national priority, with some success. Significant regional disparities in human development remain, however. Unemployment, especially among youth, is a major concern. Dependence on the markets of the neighbouring countries, scarce natural resources and high population growth resulting from successive migrations reflecting the political situation in the region have all proved to be major constraints on development efforts.

UNDP has provided support for governance, including administrative reform; poverty reduction; community development; decentralization; environmental protection; and information and communications technology. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2007.

In collaboration with national partners, UNDP made several contributions to development results in Jordan. It took the lead in establishing the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group to coordinate aid between bilateral and multilateral donors and the Government, and played a catalytic role in attracting and leveraging donor support. It was pivotal in coordinating development interventions as a leader in the United Nations Country Team.

UNDP enjoyed a good reputation and relationship with the Government as a politically neutral agency. It was instrumental in supporting the strengthening of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation as the government agency responsible for coordinating and planning development initiatives. It served as an effective facilitator in supporting the Government in undertaking or joining regional development initiatives, particularly in environmental protection and management.

UNDP support was relatively strong in the governance sector, encompassing improvements in institutional development in Parliament, greater capacities to act against corruption and the creation of the first National Youth Strategy. Less progress was evident in having an effect on poverty reduction. Through overall community development, a strategic approach was taken to issues such as poverty reduction and environmental protection. Both up- and downstream activities demonstrated the links between these two areas, and more generally, with governance.

Although decentralization has been a main focus and priority of the Government of Jordan, this goal was not integrated in project activities. The mainstreaming of both gender and human rights remained somewhat incomplete, and challenges arose in encouraging citizen participation. While some inroads were made in promoting the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations at the community level, UNDP has yet to expand collaborative efforts and partnerships with organizations without an official designation.

In leveraging funds and promoting development goals, UNDP fostered partnerships among various government agencies, donors and other stakeholders. Some constraints emanated from the complex issues facing the country, however, 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 specific interventions.

Among UNDP programmes, issues arose from the fact that some had numerous and scattered projects. They were often focused on capacity-building and training.
without strategically linking these efforts to longer-term institutional and organizational development. Exit and sustainability strategies were not integrated consistently.

While UNDP made relatively small contributions compared with the Government and other donors, the potential for sustainability was there, especially given the close working relationship with Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Already, the Ministry’s oversight of development activities has demonstrated that the Government is in a position to adopt and expand 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, and successful pilot projects.

In recent years, UNDP has done an excellent job of strengthening staff capacity through courses and training in English, presentation and communication skills, and gender mainstreaming. Reprofiling the Country Office and implementing regular meetings involving both programme and operations staff has contributed to strengthening intra-office communications. Effective implementation of the in-house learning system has generally strengthened management and leadership skills. Some concerns remain, however, 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 have not been fully integrated at either the programme or project levels. Efforts to undertake joint monitoring exercises with partners and integrate these into evaluations of outcomes and impact would be valuable. Special attention needs to be focused on adopting inclusive approaches and strengthening national counterparts’ abilities in this regard.

Moving forward, articulating an overall strategic vision underpinning UNDP’s programmes should help in further demonstrating the strategic positioning of the organization. This should be considered with regard to medium- and long-term goals, and closely aligned with Jordan’s aspiration to achieve a strong knowledge-based economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen the strategic positioning and image of UNDP as a neutral player through effective dialogue and partnerships with a range of civil society organizations, private sector organizations and local communities.
- Strengthen the comparative and institutional advantage of UNDP by linking projects and activities with regional initiatives and relevant South-South Cooperation networks.
- Strengthen development results through a coherent strategy and holistic approach to intersections and overlap in the three thematic areas.
- Enhance the strategic focus on improving human development.
- Pursue systematic, gender-sensitive and consensus-building approaches to human rights issues.
- Explore the main development needs identified in the 2004 Jordan National Human Development Report as a programming guide.
- 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.
- Promote the catalyst role and comparative advantage of UNDP as a knowledge broker and neutral agency supporting the human rights-based approach to development.
- Leverage the strategic position of UNDP in the United Nations Country Team and the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group, including for enhancing dialogue among key donors to mobilize resources.
- Develop strategies and approaches for more effective links between up- and downstream levels.
- Connect exit strategies with strategic entry points for institutional and capacity development.
- Consider and integrate options for sustainability into project design.
- Explore opportunities for joint evaluations.
- Integrate effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Conduct assessments or outcome evaluations at early stages.
- Correlate evaluative evidence to selected variables that determine the nature and intensity of intermediate and longer-term results and types of recipients.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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See the full reports at the Evaluation Resource Centre, erc.undp.org
Jordan has invested heavily in its people; its performance on social indicators is very good compared to other countries with similar incomes. Yet further progress is hindered by a series of challenges, including economic stress; high unemployment, especially among young people and women; and environmental degradation. All of these are exacerbated by adverse conditions in the surrounding region, most notably the Syrian crisis.

UNDP democratic governance programmes have stressed enhancing the accountability of key public institutions and promoting people’s interactions with the State. Environment programmes have aimed to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework. Through socioeconomic programmes, UNDP has helped to realize national priorities related to poverty reduction, with a resilience component to respond to the mass influx of Syrian refugees. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2013 to 2017.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2013-2015: $34.6 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2013-2015**

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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2013-2015 ($ MILLIONS)**

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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, the evaluation found UNDP’s effectiveness in Jordan was mixed. The governance programme made some contribution to political and institutional reform. Examples include work with the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the property tax management system. The IEC effectively supervised parliamentary elections in 2013 and 2016. Voter turnout was much higher compared to the 2010 elections, which had low turnout and low public confidence. Interventions to bolster the capacities of political representatives, encourage citizen participation, and improve the relationship between citizens and representatives were less effective.

Under the environment programme, UNDP supported the preparation of policies, regulations and guidelines, but key stakeholders did not always find these relevant. The programme was overly project-oriented, failing to cohesively group initiatives with similar objectives and partners.

UNDP aided the Government in developing strategies to address poverty reduction and food security, but implementation remained a challenge, including due to the pressures of the refugee crisis. Local interventions in a number of priority areas yielded mixed results. The cash-for-work programme, for example, increased incomes and a sense of community belonging, but the number of beneficiaries has been limited. On vocational training and youth employment, UNDP took a demand-driven approach, learning from an earlier pilot project in which only a third of the participants joined the labour market. This time, the initiative identified labour market needs beforehand and applied on-the-job training. Around 90 percent of participants landed full-time jobs.

The Government integrated the development needs of communities hosting Syrian refugees within the humanitarian response; UNDP was instrumental in coordinating a resilience framework contributing to aid coordination and effectiveness. It is not clear, however, what will happen to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation’s Secretariat for the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria crisis when external support comes to an end.

Gender mainstreaming results varied. In the environment programme, most interventions paid little attention to targeting women. Some positive contributions to women’s empowerment occurred through the emergency employment programme.

UNDP and the Government share a common strategic framework for realizing the national development agenda, but the country programme suffered from various programme components being implemented in isolation. Aiming to shift from a project-based approach,
UNDP reduced the number of projects in the most recent programme cycle, yet it still consisted largely of individual projects.

Results achieved under larger interventions with explicit exit strategies and capacity-building components, such as in the governance and environment programmes, are likely to be sustained. The anti-corruption project has buy-in from key national partners, for example. Most environment interventions are funded by the Global Environment Facility, which mandates exit strategies and government co-financing.

Strong internal management practices put overall programme budget utilization rates above the corporate threshold for satisfactory utilization. Some challenges stemmed from frequent staff turnover, however, which interrupted implementation and resulted in loss of institutional memory. Coordination with other development actors was not optimal, particularly in areas where other agencies have comparative technical strengths.

UNDP has benefited from large flows of humanitarian funding, and leveraged funding from bilateral partners and other sources for its refugee response and the rest of the programme, achieving a 130 percent increase in programme expenditure. Yet given projected decreases in funding flows, UNDP needs to re-examine some assumptions on partnerships. Stronger results-based management practices and skills could enhance fundraising potential.

Development stakeholders agreed that UNDP’s comparative strengths are its neutrality, flexibility, responsiveness, local presence and strong delivery channels. UNDP needs to do more to build on these strengths to form and leverage strategic partnerships with governmental, non-governmental and donor partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Jordan’s governance and socioeconomic reforms are unfinished business. The focus of the UNDP programme on democratic governance and public sector reforms, socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability will thus continue to be relevant into the next programme cycle. To increase its impact, UNDP should establish the causal relationships and intersections between the development challenges it aims to address, such as the connection between unemployment and poverty, between good governance and economic reform, and between environmental degradation and poverty.
• The Syrian refugee situation is likely going to extend over a longer period than was initially foreseen, and UNDP should continue to plan for this.
• The country office should prioritize gender mainstreaming in the next country programme. This should include preparing a gender strategy and a related implementation framework.
• The UNDP role as lead UN agency for coordination in Jordan needs to be strengthened.
• UNDP should use its comparative advantage with the Government to continue advocacy on sensitive issues, such as wider engagement of civil society in programme interventions.
• The country office should implement its gender strategy and correct the imbalance between men and women professional staff.
• While recognizing that a reduction in field office staff is inevitable, this kind of decision cannot solely answer to immediate financial considerations, but must also take into account UNDP’s positioning as a privileged interlocutor for local authorities, its proximity to the poor it must serve as a priority, as well as future financing opportunities, for example, those that should ultimately result from the REDD+ or Peace Consolidation Programme process.
• The country office must strengthen its partnerships and improve its efficiency by working on its institutional culture, which is too bureaucratic and fragmented.
• At both the headquarters and country level, UNDP must improve its basket funds management skills and, to this end, reconsider some of the issues related to the management of these funds.
• The UNDP country office must reorganize its monitoring and evaluation resources to provide for better synergy among M&E staff and greater independence of the evaluation function.

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Libya has a high human development rank, but still needs to address disparities among different geographic regions. Equally important is the need to balance ongoing national economic restructuring with social policies that safeguard the living standards of the vulnerable. To sustain development and growth, the Libyan economy has undergone transition from an almost total dependence on energy resources to a relatively liberal economy with diversified sources of revenue. Progress has been steady but slow.

UNDP has offered support in the areas of economic diversification, governance, capacity building, and the development of education and a knowledge society. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2009.

UNDP has not been able to respond to changes in national priorities—even when these were made quite explicit by national policy statements or actions. When the country decided to develop strategies and mechanisms to accelerate the diversification of its economy and widen the role of the private sector to become the engine of development and source of foreign investments, for example, UNDP did not use its corporate and comparative advantage to play an active role in helping to develop needed strategies.

In a demand-driven environment, UNDP worked directly with partner institutions or, when required, invited specialized UN institutions to assist in project implementation, while retaining responsibility for all related implementation, monitoring and follow-up activities. This level of relevance motivated Libyan authorities to provide necessary funding for project implementation.

The UNDP corporate strength of providing upstream policy advice was not visible and, therefore, cannot be confirmed. Country-office management and staff provided guidance on specific project-related situations during design and implementation. When financed by a particular agency, UNDP interventions were clearly relevant to that agency’s needs, yet relevance was more difficult to assess in the context of broader national strategic priorities.

This may be due to the country office’s positioning as an agency responding to the requests of national institutions that provide all funds for project implementation. Such positioning has deprived UNDP from attaining an upstream policy advisory role—despite highlighting its importance in the 2006-2009 Country Programme Document. In the absence of a UNDP advisory resource, national authorities may have looked to other international organizations to meet growing demand for such services.

Due to the past UNDP role as a facilitator of UN executed projects, a large part of evaluated programme cycles was devoted to projects that may not have had a direct human development impact. As UNDP moved away from UN agency execution towards nationally executed projects, a greater focus on human development was evident.

While being primarily a partner of Libyan national authorities, UNDP has also developed strong relationships with a number of Libya’s emerging non-governmental organizations. Twinning arrangements with specific entities produced positive results, such as the success of the project to jointly engage the Libyan National Meteorological Centre and the French national meteorological service Météo-France, with assistance from the World Meteorological Organization.
Little progress was made on economic diversification, a UNDP priority. But recent agreements with The World Bank demonstrated opportunities for multilateral development organizations to engage with Libyan authorities on this issue. Only very initial steps towards mainstreaming the Millennium Development Goals occurred.

One success story was the rehabilitation of the City of Ghadames, which was widely shared at international conferences and covered by global media. A mobile caravan travelled around the country to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, had access to prisons, and enlisted the cooperation of the Religious Affairs Authority to encourage male and female religious leaders to participate.

Under the governance programme, work with the General People’s Committee for Justice was limited to introducing e-governance in only two pilot courts. As part of support to information and communications technologies for development, the quality of experts varied, but overall training and the transfer of knowledge and skills created a valuable asset. Education reform projects included curriculum review and development, and provided training activities that developed human resources.

Environmental sustainability and development projects offered little value. The Environment General Authority reported that UNDP advisory services were almost non-existent, and working mechanisms were unclear and cumbersome.

Implementation delays were costly, raising questions among Libyan authorities. Some national authorities knew of balances remaining in their projects, but no action was taken by UNDP to implement activities that could consume such balances or return them to national authorities.

Limited effectiveness stemmed in part from the poor design of the results framework; outcomes were set very high, so UNDP contributions were difficult to identify. This may be due to an ad hoc—rather than strategic—approach to programming, which has often led to an incoherent set of activities aimed at contributing to the stated programmatic outcomes.

An on-the-ground review of projects and the comparison between these and the planned strategic outcomes in each area illuminated a sometimes significant gap between the two. While Country Programme Documents adhered to UNDP corporate priorities, the imperative to respond to the priorities of national authorities implied the diversification of intervention areas.

Although improving, UNDP capacity as an organization to respond to Libya’s needs was limited. Basic programming and project management skills need to be strengthened and greater effort devoted to learning from the past. At the same time, it was clear that certain UNDP corporate programming, management and reporting methods do not always work well in an environment where programming responds to ad hoc government requests.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Prepare the Country Programme Document in close alignment with the national development plan.
- Focus development work (as opposed to facilitation) on a small number of areas where UNDP can make a difference and add value for human development.
- Establish a more effective reporting system that meets the needs of national counterparts and undertake annual programme reviews with national stakeholders.
- Following the approval of the new Country Programme Document by the UNDP Executive Board, prepare a Country Programme Action Plan involving national counterparts and develop a mechanism for holding annual reviews.
- Develop a strategy for resource mobilization.
- Prioritize further capacity development both at the UNDP country office and its counterpart national agencies, and intensify ongoing efforts in this respect.
- Close projects that have been open for a long time with little or no activity.
- Ensure, to the extent possible, the recruitment of Arabic speakers as experts for local projects to facilitate communication and reach the desired level of agreements.
- Clearly define and reach mutual acceptance of UNDP management fees.

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Morocco made steady progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in reducing absolute poverty, but inequalities remain in terms of education and gender, and across regions. In 2011, a major political and social reform resulted in a new Constitution, with provisions that include universal suffrage for the election of regional councils.

UNDP provided support in the closely related areas of democratic governance, accelerating the achievement of the MDGs and reducing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and the environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2015.

UNDP is a trusted and responsive partner in Morocco, with the capacity to engage with diverse stakeholders. It has been a pioneer in the field of decentralization and the territorial anchoring of democratic governance, and achieved positive results through pilot projects, notably in its environment portfolio.

Support in developing the capacity of selected governance institutions has evolved through training, awareness-building, advocacy activities, study tours and experience sharing. A civil registry project prepared trainers to train 12,000 employees of the Ministry of the Interior and local authorities on modernized technology and updated regulations. Other governance efforts aided the creation of management structures and results-based systems for monitoring and evaluation, and fostered a climate for dialogue and cooperation. The Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, in preparing its Universal Periodic Review report for the Human Rights Council, took a new, participatory approach, building on discussions with nearly 400 representatives of civil society, unions, the media, universities and governmental and national institutions throughout the country.

Towards accelerating MDG progress and reducing vulnerabilities, projects sought to directly or indirectly reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion, although results have been relatively modest in quantitative terms. At the local level, the majority (if not all) projects were implemented in disadvantaged regions, and aimed to improve living conditions and livelihoods. Jobs and opportunities for income were generated, although these results remain modest and are mostly not sustainable.

Nationally, UNDP has provided tools and capacities to reorient public policies in favour of the disadvantaged. Consideration of the multidimensional facets of poverty enhanced the income poverty approach used previously, revealing significant disparities and inequalities. Decision makers subsequently prioritized social spending in

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2014: $109.8 MILLION**

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<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>26</td>
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</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP is a trusted and responsive partner in Morocco, with the capacity to engage with diverse stakeholders. It has been a pioneer in the field of decentralization and the territorial anchoring of democratic governance, and achieved positive results through pilot projects, notably in its environment portfolio.

Support in developing the capacity of selected governance institutions has evolved through training, awareness-building, advocacy activities, study tours and experience sharing. A civil registry project prepared trainers to train 12,000 employees of the Ministry of the Interior and local authorities on modernized technology and updated regulations. Other governance efforts aided the creation of management structures and results-based systems for monitoring and evaluation, and fostered a climate for dialogue and cooperation. The Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, in preparing its Universal Periodic Review report for the Human Rights Council, took a new, participatory approach, building on discussions with nearly 400 representatives of civil society, unions, the media, universities and governmental and national institutions throughout the country.

Although UNDP has not been the driving force behind the movement towards greater decentralization, it has adapted activities to a national move in that direction through integrated local development programmes and strategic planning with municipalities. Work with 140 local governments, primarily in rural areas, helped them draft local development plans; a provincial development plan was devised for Tata province. The initiative reinforced strategic planning processes proposed by the Local Authorities Office, testing different methodologies later included in nationally disseminated guidelines.

UNDP bolstered the capacities of local stakeholders to engage in participatory approaches, and integrate gender dimensions, results-based management and environmental concerns in local plans. Work with civil society has facilitated networking, learning, project implementation and participation in various consultative fora, with local associations now seen as essential partners of local and regional governments.

Towards accelerating MDG progress and reducing vulnerabilities, projects sought to directly or indirectly reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion, although results have been relatively modest in quantitative terms. At the local level, the majority (if not all) projects were implemented in disadvantaged regions, and aimed to improve living conditions and livelihoods. Jobs and opportunities for income were generated, although these results remain modest and are mostly not sustainable.

Nationally, UNDP has provided tools and capacities to reorient public policies in favour of the disadvantaged. Consideration of the multidimensional facets of poverty enhanced the income poverty approach used previously, revealing significant disparities and inequalities. Decision makers subsequently prioritized social spending in
the national budget, and drew up an action plan for nine priority regions on reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

On gender equality and women’s empowerment, results have been modest, particularly in older projects that did not integrate gender concerns in their design, as well as those with a national scope and with a focus on technical issues related to the environment. Results were more notable at the local level, especially as a result of support to income-generating activities that primarily targeted women’s associations and cooperatives. The activities of the decentralized Southern Oasis and Tafilalet Oasis programmes created a number of economic interest groups and cooperatives in agriculture and artisan activities, with 60 percent of cooperatives made up entirely of women.

With respect to other forms of inequality, UNDP facilitated the participation of stakeholders who have not traditionally been engaged in development debates, notably youth. A national integrated youth strategy was created, and over 500 workshops and discussions on the MDGs were attended by some 40,000 youths.

The majority of interventions on the environment and sustainable development led to immediate results. Greater understanding of these issues in some cases led to their integration in national, sectoral and/or local planning tools. Pilot projects did not contribute significantly to expected results such as effective environmental protection or improved living conditions. They did, however, serve as models to be replicated on a larger scale.

UNDP projects were relevant to Morocco’s national priorities and international commitments, and the continuation of a number of interventions demonstrated a certain coherence in the programme. Although exit strategies were rarely developed, the potential sustainability of the majority of projects is good, given partners’ strong ownership, and effective individual and institutional capacity development. This potential is threatened, however, by frequent delays in decision-making processes at the end of projects, and in replication or upscaling. Projects supported by UNDP are often innovative in nature, but their relatively short duration means they do not reach the maturity needed to be quickly scaled up.

UNDP competencies in project management and its contributions in the area of capacity development were considered its greatest added value. For projects funded by the Government, relatively fast and flexible procedures, transparent and robust management, and high-quality reporting have all been appreciated. A monitoring and evaluation unit was established in 2011, and annual and mid-year reviews instituted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

A widely recognized ability to forge partnerships supported exchanges with countries in both the South and the North that allowed partners to benefit from others’ experiences and good practices. This form of cooperation, however, while seen as one of UNDP’s principal missions, was considered insufficient.

In 2012, UNDP adopted an interdisciplinary approach to programming. Projects incorporate several thematic areas, and are designed and monitored through a collective process that involves all relevant national stakeholders. This approach should be encouraged. Particularly at a time of heavy dependence on a limited number of funding sources—the Government provides over 60 percent of resources—UNDP needs to sharpen its comparative advantages, including innovative interventions and capacity to bring people together.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP must ensure that the interventions it supports remain innovative and that it does not become confined to a role of fund manager. While continuing to capitalize on its project management capacities, UNDP should strengthen its thought leadership and advocacy work so that it can continue to be a leading voice in development debates at all levels.
- UNDP should continue its role as a convener, bringing together different institutional stakeholders, as well as traditional and non-traditional stakeholders.
- UNDP should create conditions conducive to the sustainability of results achieved through its support.
- UNDP should further capitalize on its programmes and projects by putting greater emphasis on knowledge sharing between different national institutions as well as with other countries.
- UNDP should continue to support the establishment of monitoring systems by national partners in order to institutionalize a culture of results-based management.
- UNDP should take advantage of new financing and partnership opportunities.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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In 1991, parts of the north-western area of the Somali Republic declared independence as the Republic of Somaliland. To this date, no country has formally recognized it as a sovereign state. In 1998, the leaders of the north-eastern region of Puntland declared it an autonomous state but without seeking secession from Somalia. Most of South and Central Somalia remain in turmoil. High rates of poverty are driven by intractable conflicts, persistent droughts, lack of economic resources, and a paucity of infrastructure.

UNDP has provided support under several main programmes, including governance and reconciliation, rule of law and security, and recovery and sustainable livelihoods. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2005 to 2010.

UNDP in Somalia provided timely support to national reconciliation, peace promotion and political processes, such as the Djibouti Conference in 2008, which led to a ceasefire between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, and the formation of a broader-based Government. It was involved in the payment of salaries for parliamentarians and other officials in the TFG, and offered important support for the drafting of a new federal Constitution.

Assistance to federal institutions, such as the ‘start-up package’ designed to facilitate the TFG installation in Mogadishu in 2009, has often been administrative. In contrast, governance programmes in Somaliland and Puntland cover more traditional interventions through technical inputs, capacity development, and some infrastructure and equipment. These have produced tangible results in, for example, civil service reform.

UNDP shifted its rule of law and security programme from strong institutional support to community level interventions and a more assertive rights-based approach. Assistance to civilian police provided training, basic operational equipment and infrastructure in all three regions. Yet in South and Central Somalia, the payment of police stipends affected the perception of UNDP as a neutral partner. In Somaliland and Puntland, continued building of civilian police capacity significantly contributed to improved security.

For all three regions, UNDP included human rights in the training curriculum for police officers and promoted gender considerations, such as through special desks for women and children in police stations. Other assistance aided in drafting a code of conduct for the judiciary, harmonizing formal and customary laws, and providing free legal aid to the poor. Positive results in Somaliland and Puntland included improved outreach of the judicial system to rural areas through the creation of mobile courts and mobile legal aid clinics.

Towards disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, UNDP supported the downsizing of security forces mainly in Puntland and Somaliland. In South and Central Somalia, the fragility of the different political advances and the repeated resumptions of conflict negated any possibility of such a programme. UNDP gradually moved towards small arms control programmes in Somaliland and a community safety approach under an armed violence reduction programme.

Income generation through work to improve social and economic infrastructure was one of the objectives of the employment generation for early recovery, area-based early recovery and watershed management projects.

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**EVALUATION BRIEF  JULY 2010**

**UNDPS IN SOMALIA**

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**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2005-2009: $244.4 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2005-2009**

<table>
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<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2005-2009 ($ MILLIONS)**

- **HIV/AIDS**: 5.4
- **Recovery/sustainable livelihoods**: 32.8
- **Cross-cutting/others**: 36.7
- **Rule of law and security**: 66.4
- **Governance and reconciliation**: 103.2

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**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

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Income generation through work to improve social and economic infrastructure was one of the objectives of the employment generation for early recovery, area-based early recovery and watershed management projects.
During its first year, the employment generation project generated a total of 430,000 workdays. Rehabilitated infrastructure included water catchment areas, rural access roads, irrigation canals and strengthened river embankments. But most of the income generated was only for the short term.

UNDP strengthened the institutional capacity of the three AIDS commissions, developed and tested a number of training tools for general awareness, and worked with populations most at risk. To take forward the gender agenda, a national gender policy was developed by the Government of Somaliland, and gender focal points were being set up in each ministry. Puntland devised a gender policy and a gender strategic plan. Gender mainstreaming in UNDP programmes, however, was too often seen as quotas for women beneficiaries. While this was a positive step, a more nuanced and holistic understanding needs to be reinforced.

Contributions to development results varied by region, but this diversity was not reflected sufficiently in programming instruments. While UNDP cannot develop separate programme documents, instruments such as work plans could reflect the reality more adequately.

In general, projects in the more stable northern regions were more effective. Many UNDP interventions in the South and Central region have resulted in inputs such as equipment and even training being lost following the resurgence of conflict. In other cases, it was too early to assess results as interventions, particularly for capacity development and institutional building, require a long-term comprehensive approach that has not often been present. UNDP was still often operating in an emergency mode, not paying enough attention to technical quality and longer term sustainability. Programme cycles have been limited to two years, a situation not conducive to a longer term approach.

Some major donors as well as the UN Political Office in Somalia have expected UNDP to support the political process or dispense administrative services on their behalf. This association may have damaged the image of the organization and reduced its capacity for some of its traditional development activities. UNDP has often responded with nimbleness to requests to undertake new and unforeseen activities, but will need to find means to gradually concentrate more of its resources and energy on core mandate activities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP needs to re-anchor its country programme to areas that build on its core competence and are central to its mandate.
- The next country programme should strike an appropriate balance between interventions in support of building the capacity of government institutions and initiatives to help address, in the short and medium term, the chronic development needs of vulnerable groups of population, including on pressing environmental issues.
- UNDP needs to reassert overall leadership on development issues within the UN community and ensure that development needs of the Somali population and support for achievement of MDGs receive increasing attention from authorities as well as development agencies, non-governmental organizations and the donor community.
- UNDP should develop three region-specific five-year operational work plans in full consultation with relevant partners. This should be accompanied by a system of annual participatory reviews.
- UNDP needs to engage with a wider range of actors, including independent observers, researchers, academics and civil society to sharpen its analysis and understanding of the complex context of its operating environment.
- UNDP needs to ensure greater coherence within and between programmes and establish mechanisms that promote coherence, complementarity and synergy as key elements of the institutional culture.
- UNDP should increase Nairobi-based staff in the field and interaction with Somali counterparts.
- UNDP should pursue a conscious strategy to enhance the quality of programme planning and delivery of results and financial resources.
- UNDP needs to develop a gender strategy and implementation framework. There is a need for dedicated staff resources to promote gender mainstreaming.
- UNDP headquarters needs to provide more active, timely support to the country office, develop guidance for offices in conflict environments with restricted access, and facilitate sharing of knowledge and best practices between offices operating in similar environments around the world.

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In 2012, Somalia witnessed political transition with the adoption of a Provisional Constitution and election of a new Parliament and President. Supported by the international community, the Federal Government has been making progress on six priorities: functioning institutions, economic recovery, peacebuilding, service delivery, international relations and national reconciliation.

UNDP’s programmes, developed in line with strategic UN assistance frameworks, have aimed at a longer-term commitment to Somalia. Four outcomes comprised: better abilities to build peace and manage conflict; more inclusive, equitable and accountable governance, improved services, human security, access to justice and human rights; an increase in sustainable livelihood opportunities and improved natural resources management; and greater gender equality and empowerment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation in Somalia that covered work from 2011 to 2015.

In Somalia, both the United Nations as a whole and UNDP have come under criticism based largely on the failures of peacekeeping missions in the 1990s, but also on more recent performance. UNDP’s work in the governance sector was deemed by many internal and external observers to be political, externally driven and too ambitious. Despite this backdrop, and Somalia’s peculiarly challenging programming environment, the evaluation found that UNDP has made important contributions.

Generally, UNDP programme components have been relevant to Somalia’s development needs, but with much greater emphasis on contributing to development, peace and security through addressing governance issues than on strengthening livelihoods. Under the governance outcome, UNDP effectiveness varied. The drafting of the Provisional Constitution, while containing many ambiguities and lacking broad stakeholder consultation, was a major achievement. The joint programme on local governance exhibited great promise in the areas of policy, service delivery and participation, and strong national ownership will likely make the results sustainable, with the Government already using programme approaches to expand the scheme.

Both the current and previous evaluations have found that the contribution to strengthening national capacities has been less than expected. New initiatives aimed at broad capacity development in the public sector should recognize past failures and analyse context-specific constraints and opportunities. The Somalia Institutional Development Programme was an exception to otherwise strongly relevant components under the governance outcome. The project was supply-driven with limited consultations with user line ministries before design.

To make a meaningful contribution to the organization’s corporate vision of eradicating extreme poverty and significantly reducing inequality and exclusion, the evaluation concluded that greater investment is required in strengthening livelihoods. The poverty reduction and environment programme carried out interesting and useful work, but at too small a scale to respond to actual needs. Given the size of the country, the national ambition of the programme, the top-heaviness of programme cost structure, high operational costs and modest success so far in attracting funding, interventions amount to a collection of small, ‘one-off’ injections of assistance in various locales, which are neither cumulative nor transformative.

On gender mainstreaming, UNDP was effective...
in promoting more equal representation and participation, and enhancing the quality of women’s participation, such as through building the capacity of women’s organizations. Efforts aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence and helping women to access legal protection have also been successful. Here again, however, the small size and scope of these initiatives fell short against the enormity of the issue.

UNDP management and staff are committed to the corporate gender equality and women’s empowerment strategy, and the country office has a gender mainstreaming architecture in place. While this is important, UNDP will deliver few gender results if it does not move away from a focus on ‘soft’ support (gender policy, advocacy, lobbying) and increasing the number of women beneficiaries in training events. Greater emphasis should be placed on women’s economic empowerment, and specifically on enhancing their technical and business skills.

A major challenge in Somalia is implementing a single country programme across different operating environments—the Federal Government, existing and emerging states, and Somaliland. There is a trade-off between adapting to different environments and programme coherence. While it is unnecessary to implement every programme component across all regions, there are areas where by doing so, UNDP has helped to bring about coherence across the country, such as in the response to HIV and AIDS.

The complex structure of the Somalia country office creates extra challenges for effective and efficient management. Sub-offices/area offices drive delivery, particularly in the north where security conditions allow for smoother programme implementation. But since these offices are located at the periphery of the UNDP structure, they have difficulty solving key administrative issues. Project implementation and supervision face challenges, with annual programme implementation rates, except for 2012, lower than the corporate threshold of 80 percent.

Monitoring and reporting of results tend to emphasize inputs and immediate outputs with less emphasis on intermediate outcome results. This can be linked to several factors: the broad framework of UNDP support, which has to be responsive to different governments; the intangible and difficult-to-measure nature of UNDP support; and insufficient institutional capacity. UNDP’s inability to demonstrate its contribution to development results has consequences in terms of forging effective partnerships and mobilizing resources.

In sum, despite limited resources and a challenging context, UNDP has made efforts to remain relevant to national development priorities, building on its long experience in the country. The perception among donors that UNDP is neither a strong intellectual leader nor a dependable operational channel for programme delivery is slowly changing, with acknowledgement of efforts by new senior management to be more transparent and open.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognizing the complexity and fluidity of the Somali context, the evaluation recommends that UNDP, in developing its new country programme, should continue to pursue an adaptive planning and management approach.
- UNDP should recalibrate the profile of the poverty reduction and environment programme if it is to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the vulnerable population.
- There is a need to review the country programme’s current approach to capacity development and to develop a conceptual framework for more effective and sustainable capacity development across the board.
- UNDP should prioritize substantive gender mainstreaming in the next country programme.
- UNDP should increase investments to enhance internal monitoring and reporting capacities. It is encouraging that UNDP has already initiated alternative institutional arrangements to strengthen results-based monitoring and reporting, such as third-party monitoring in 2015. Capacities of implementing partners to monitor their work during implementation and ex-post should also be assessed and strengthened as part of broader capacity development efforts.

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UNDP IN SUDAN

Sudan has experienced longstanding civil conflict and widespread poverty. Development, particularly in the South, has been negatively affected by prolonged conflict, now entering its sixth decade. It has been the principal cause of the displacement of an estimated 4 million people. War and the Government’s efforts to preserve internal stability have diverted resources away from development and social sectors.

UNDP programmes comprised area-based strategies, peacebuilding, rehabilitation, and energy and the environment, among other issues. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2001.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 1997-2001: $44 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2001

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<td>GEF</td>
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<td>UN Capital Development Fund</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Other funds</td>
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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 1997-2001 ($ MILLIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Other areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy, environment and natural resource management</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area rehabilitation and reconstruction</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Participatory area development</td>
<td>55</td>
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FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Area-based programmes were a major focus of UNDP support in Sudan. Directly addressing some of the most fundamental issues associated with poverty alleviation, gender and participatory development, they represented a viable development model that could be used in peacebuilding, although sustainability and cost effectiveness remain concerns. The programmes established mechanisms centred on community-based organizations—a groundbreaking advance in Sudan that has translated into real improvements in people’s lives. The Government has not replicated the approach, however, and the absence of recurrent government budgets, wages and essential infrastructure investments at the local level have diverted finances away from village revolving funds to cover basic social services. This weakened the viability of the funds, which were already poorly resourced.

UNDP’s nascent peacebuilding activities showed considerable potential in terms of strategic positioning and relevance as well as resource mobilization. They focused on the creation of mechanisms and processes for information-sharing and coordination. But UNDP did not yet appear to have a clear strategy to guide its work in this area, which could potentially involve assistance on a range of conflicts. Increasing collaboration with the World Bank to introduce some of the policy foundations for a possible future participation of Sudan in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative could create opportunities for future dialogue on the peace process.

The energy and environment programme produced significant results, despite being for the most part focused on international conventions. Achievements such as increased access to safe water, increased vegetation cover and production of seedlings have had a positive effect on people’s lives. Raised awareness of environmental issues, locally and nationally, may have laid the groundwork for eventual policy change, although activities were treated in relative isolation. Potential linkages with other programmes were not exploited.

UNDP initiated preparatory activities in civil service reform and support to the National Assembly that are unlikely to be strategic at the present time, but could be reconsidered in the future if circumstances permit. New initiatives in the area of local governance hold some promise in terms of an enabling environment and linkages to UNDP’s prior assistance.

A number of management issues greatly impacted programme performance and UNDP’s reputation in Sudan. Insufficient substantive and financial monitoring by the NEX Management Support Unit and UNDP resulted in a serious financial crisis. Annual audits by the
Sudanese Auditor General warned repeatedly of serious shortcomings, but neither the unit nor the UNDP country office followed up on the findings and recommendations. The UNDP Senior Management Team took measures to improve UNDP’s image among donors and national partners, but the office will need to build internal capacities to deliver programmes and account for resources. UNDP headquarters will have to provide extensive support and resources aimed at strengthening the office. If UNDP is unable to effectively address its resource and capacity constraints in Sudan, it should consider closing down its office and reallocating its resources to other priority offices.

Development assistance in Sudan is dwarfed by humanitarian assistance, and inter-agency rivalries are strong. Both issues affected UNDP’s ability to take the lead in coordination within and beyond the UN system. Based on previous experience and on emerging development opportunities, the new Resident Coordinator should have a UNDP background to bolster both the country office and the development agenda. UNDP also needs to create greater general awareness of its programmes among potential development partners. The failure to do so, at least prior to 2000, negatively affected its profile and credibility.

UNDP’s key partners in Sudan have been the Government and local beneficiaries in the area-based programmes. UNDP was restricted somewhat in developing partnerships with non-governmental organizations due to their relative scarcity after restrictions were placed on them, and to their reorientation towards humanitarian assistance. These factors have undermined areas of potential collaboration as originally envisaged in the areas of advocacy and rural development.

Although the UNDP office has managed to mobilize $4 million in cost sharing, resource mobilization has been negatively affected by sanctions leading to an exclusive emphasis on humanitarian assistance and the use of the Consolidated Appeals Process as the sole mechanism for pledging assistance to Sudan.

On balance, UNDP’s activities were often ad hoc. It needs to develop a more coherent and relevant country programme. Specifically, with a window of opportunity for peace opening in Sudan’s civil war, UNDP is uniquely placed to bridge the gap from humanitarian assistance to development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

• UNDP should refocus its programme on conflict resolution and peacebuilding, building on and adapting the approaches and models of community-based development applied during the past several cycles.
• The refocused programme should support the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Framework as well as other viable ongoing initiatives.
• UNDP should explore ways to operate in rebel-held territories and work across Regional Bureaux.
• UNDP should further cultivate linkages with the World Bank, particularly with a view to creating conditions that would be conducive to the continuation of the peace process and to more effective resource management.
• UNDP should urgently make a realistic assessment of the preparatory projects in its current portfolio with a view to weeding out those that are unlikely to be politically viable or worthwhile at the present time.
• UNDP should apply a variation of direct execution as the central modality for programme delivery.
• UNDP should link its area-based peacebuilding with programmes to help strengthen local governance.
• The UNDP programme should focus even more heavily on the achievement of sustainability in all dimensions.
• Innovative mechanisms and partnerships will be needed to ensure sustainability.
• If UNDP is to adequately reposition itself, the country office needs sufficient resources of its own.
• Programmes funded from central resources such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) should be contingent upon the allocation of sufficient national resources to ensure follow-up and implementation.
• Peacebuilding activities should graduate from the current focus on mechanisms and processes for collaboration and dialogue to an increased focus on concrete programmes addressing developmental dimensions.
• While programme build-up needs to enable the UNDP office to exploit opportunities as they arise as a result of the political process, it should be gradualist with a view to ensuring the office to build its capacity sufficiently.
• UNDP should appoint a Resident Coordinator with sufficient development experience to place the international response to peacebuilding needs on an appropriate footing beyond a humanitarian emphasis.

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SYRIA is engaged in a balancing act, in which the need for economic liberalization has been recognized, while at the same time the need for political reform is being debated. Syria faces the challenge of reforming its economy in ways that allow for greater economic diversification and a more solid national economic base, while taking into account fluctuations in net official development assistance flows and eventual dwindling reliance on the oil sector as a major foreign currency earner. The unstable situation in the region affects Syria's ability to focus its efforts on development issues, however. The influence wielded by various power groups within the Government is clearly related to regional dynamics.

Overall UNDP strategic areas of support included a focus on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood; sustainable use of natural resources and environmental conservation; and institutional development and good governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1999 to 2004.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 1997-2006: $37.67 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2002-2007**

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<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPROVALS BY STRATEGIC RESULTS GOALS, 2003-2007 (PERCENTAGE)**

- Governance: 23%
- Environment: 38%
- Poverty: 39%

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP in Syria has made significant contributions to a strategic plan for the environment, to placing poverty more explicitly on the development agenda, and to moving towards a stronger focus on good governance and administrative reform. Such achievements indicate the organization’s positive role as a neutral partner and promoter of human development.

One key challenge was how to handle the broader processes of development, beyond just programmes and individual projects. UNDP also faced various balancing acts: between a project focus and a policy focus; and between technocratic perspectives and a narrow focus on economic development on the one hand, and advocacy of the human and social dimensions of the same development processes on the other hand.

In general, UNDP responded to national priorities, and as such positioned itself to contribute to national development results. But prior to 2000, it largely took a ‘business as usual’ approach intent on not courting undue political controversy. New, post-2000 opportunities presented by the Government provided some impetus for change. UNDP attempted to push the boundaries, for example, in the shift from ‘economic’ to ‘good’ governance. It continued to promote public discourse on poverty, but could have been more proactive and innovative.

The Jabal Al- Hoss/Phase II project, which focused on providing credit to poor families for income-generation opportunities, was perceived as a success, and will provide a model for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence, which will support replication in other areas of Syria. Preliminary findings, however, showed that the project might be contributing to further indebtedness, and did not target the poorest or empower female beneficiaries. The institutionalization and sustainability of the model was not clear, and might require new mechanisms, such as allowing the establishment of local community-based organizations, which would require reviewing and reforming existing regulatory frameworks. In this, UNDP can and should play a strong advocacy role.

UNDP missed an opportunity to support the judiciary, an area of crucial importance to the reform process. It lacked an effective gender strategy for development interventions. Other gaps were apparent in targeting the poor, mobilizing strategic partnerships, and promoting information and communication technology as a cross-cutting intervention. A primary focus on relationships and links with Government counterparts meant that UNDP did little to engage with emerging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are trying to stake out a niche in Syria’s development process.
A particular weakness related to monitoring and evaluation, which largely focused on the project level and was perceived as a reporting exercise. This had implications for evaluating outcomes to ensure accountability, enhancing learning from programme implementation and developing effective advocacy strategies.

Sustainability and exit strategies remained a general problem. In the environment sector, various projects were initiated some years ago. Discussions with the Government on this issue do not appear to be initiated in a timely manner. Counterparts had not in varying instances committed personnel and resources to continue projects.

Effective advocacy strategies need to be developed. Some efforts related to governance, building on the rights-based approaches emerging in global discourses, and including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), produced varied results. A national report on the goals garnered some coverage in the Syrian press; the 10th Five Year Plan was expected to reflect the MDGs. It was not clear to what extent the goals have been internalized in society in general, however.

Broader advocacy that touches on democratic governance is arguably the most difficult task facing UNDP. This implies ensuring that a narrow technocratic and economic perspective of reform is not at the expense of advocacy—through demonstration—for broader reform processes conducive to human development.

While UNDP has ‘done the right thing’ in terms of focusing on strategic goals of relevance to Syria’s development needs and priorities, it has not necessarily ‘done things the right way’. A temptation to invest in projects that the Government signaled as important resulted in UNDP spreading itself too thin. Projects need to be re-evaluated with this caveat in mind. While the organization should take note of priorities identified by the State Planning Commission, in choosing among potential projects, it should draw upon past experiences and clarify which interventions are best left to other partners.

Above all, strategic goals need to be more clearly defined in terms of the human dimensions of development. A more strategic approach should also take explicit account of cross-cutting factors linking development interventions both within as well as between pertinent thematic areas. This will be crucial to strengthening UNDP’s profile as a key player in advancing human development in Syria.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The current transition phase is opening some space for cautious reform, but checks and balances in place need to be taken into account. This is not the time for a radical change in UNDP strategy in Syria.
- UNDP must continue its focus on strengthening the executive in terms of administrative support and competence-building, as well as improving capacity for coordination.
- A conscious strategy for sharing lessons learned from other countries should be developed.
- UNDP should establish a clearer profile on the basic issues of human development not only within government circles, but also within the expanding private sector and among elements of civil society that are striving to emerge and gain a voice.
- UNDP should improve its advocacy strategy by linking it more clearly to its corporate mandate of promoting human development, given its comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development and donor agencies.
- There is a need to strengthen the focus on the social dimensions of economic growth. UNDP also has an important role to play in advocating for demand-driven data collection, focusing on poverty and gender-sensitive indicators conducive to effective development planning. The reform process also requires advocacy for gender and poverty sensitive labour policies.
- UNDP should further support NGOs as a means for widening the space for civil society and linking this with the concept of democratic governance.
- While UNDP should actively mobilize strategic partnerships to solicit non-core funding for crucial development interventions, it also needs to seek partnerships with key organizations with similar visions.
- A strong national monitoring and evaluation system needs to be developed, including to provide relevant information on UNDP’s contribution to development results.
- A strategic approach to realizing development outcomes requires explicit recognition of the complexity of cross-cutting factors, including information and communications technology and gender mainstreaming.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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See the full reports at the Evaluation Resource Centre, erc.undp.org
**UNDP IN TUNISIA**

Tunisia has undergone significant socioeconomic progress over the last few decades, becoming one of the 10 highest performing countries in terms of human development. Progress in the social sectors is attributable to the consistency of supportive budgetary policies. Yet inequalities and marked regional disparities are slowing continued progress. The January 2011 revolution released old tensions that previously were ignored or suppressed.

UNDP programmes have sought to help integrate the country into the global economy, address social challenges, protect the environment, and respond to governance issues involving the role and efficacy of the State and decentralization. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2010: $18.4 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme government</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical funds</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2010 ($ MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDGs and Poverty</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and sustainable developement</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The main themes of the UNDP governance and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) programme—notably the development of a long-term vision, work on governance indicators, capacity-building for the Court of Auditors, the modernization of public administration and support for human development—corresponded to the main objectives of Tunisian development plans.

While the promotion of the MDGs and human development took place in a timely manner, however, recommendations in two related national reports have not been acted upon. The Ministry of Development and International Cooperation did not deem it appropriate to review its approaches in light of the new conceptual framework of the MDGs. In 2007, UNDP overlooked an opportunity to adapt approaches relating to the MDGs and human development to the Tunisian context. The level of development required a more ambitious strategy, in which governance, technological innovation and adapting production systems for sustainable natural resources management would have carried more weight.

In terms of employment, UNDP had little effect. The joint project on employment in the governorates of Gafsa and Kasserine was slightly behind schedule due to the lack of cooperation and partnership between the concerned ministry and the United Nations system.

UNDP’s assistance led to gender-sensitive budgeting being incorporated into the 11th plan (2007-2011), but action on gender equality was not targeted or persistent enough to generate momentum.

In work on governance, UNDP’s constant support in modernizing and developing new financial evaluation methods enabled the Court of Auditors to assert itself as an institution guaranteeing the inspection of public expenditure. But across the various components of its governance programme, UNDP did not achieve all expected results in terms of consolidating the rule of law and the emergence of regional and local actors. With public administration reforms, actions faced some delay and had not yet produced conclusive interim results. Mixed results for the good governance development indicators stemmed from the sensitivity of this topic and disagreements between UNDP and the Government. Little progress was made towards an expanded partnership with civil society.

UNDP has consistently supported work on the environment and energy, particularly on desertification control, the preservation of biodiversity, the fight against climate change and energy conservation. These intervention areas align with national priorities and international commitments. Different programmes unquestionably strengthened the capabilities of national, regional and local institutions, and attracted several additional sources of funding. Assistance improved organizational management and the implementation of national strategies and...
policy, notably through training and improving local competencies, as well as via the transfer of new technologies, such as cogeneration, technical checks for energy efficiency, in vitro propagation of date palms and others.

From 2007, UNDP made efforts to adopt a programme approach to reduce the number of small projects and foster innovation. Yet the rigidity of the political system, and at times Tunisian bureaucracy, did not encourage dialogue between UNDP and the Government in the design and implementation of some programmes in governance and the MDGs.

Projects were generally set up to strengthen ownership and sustainability of results. Hosted by various institutions, they were often led by their staff and carefully overseen by senior staff, as in the case of the Court of Auditors and the National Agency for Energy Management. Several indications of weak ownership were evident for certain processes, however. The government-imposed confidentiality for the main documents of the Tunisia 2030 prospective vision exercise reduced its impact, and an envisioned national dialogue never took place.

UNDP’s low capacity for advisory support, the hybrid nature of the implementation approach and the lack of proper monitoring and evaluation limited abilities to manage programmes, establish fruitful partnerships and bolster national ownership. This situation was linked to the lack of sustainability strategies and to micromanagement by programme managers. The absence of a monitoring and evaluation system deprived UNDP of an overall view of programme performance and of an ability to capitalize on good practices, which could have enriched dialogue with national partners on major challenges such as employment, inequalities and governance.

The 2011 revolution opened new prospects for cooperation. Opportunities stem from the emergence of a pluralist political system and the potential for public policies that can, among other ends, spur job creation for youth. There is scope for promoting values that have been neglected for decades—such as justice, dignity (including through employment) and citizenship—and increasing possibilities for all sections of the population to exercise their hard-won freedom.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In the coming years, UNDP should view democratic governance as a priority in order to aid the emergence of a new pluralistic political system, and support the establishment and strengthening of the capacities of the new democratic institutions.
- The programme approach, initiated in 2007 by UNDP, should be extended to all projects. This will help create a critical mass of outcomes and impacts, and promote a new culture of evaluation, accountability and the integration of environmental and social dimensions into sectoral policies.
- UNDP should help the Government improve its understanding of employment-related issues and of the challenges that globalization poses to the Tunisian economy, and to develop programmes that bring innovation and provide access to expertise.
- UNDP should improve its support and advice capabilities to facilitate more effective capacity building, given the acceleration of changes in production systems.
- UNDP should improve the design and implementation of its interventions and introduce an effective monitoring and evaluation system enabling it to apply lessons learned and capitalize on best practices.
- With the Government’s agreement, UNDP should implement an action plan whereby project implementation is gradually passed on to national execution, thereby allowing for greater national ownership and a greater focus by UNDP on its strategic functions relating to development issues.
- UNDP should adopt a clear and operational development strategy for wider technical and financial partnerships that are open to the private sector and civil society.
- UNDP, in concert with other UN agencies, should consolidate and expand its advocacy and support to grass- root social networks on certain important transversal issues, such as human development, citizenship, HIV/AIDS, gender and violence against women, notably by supporting the media in order to promote the image of, and respect for, women in all spheres of society.

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The United Arab Emirates has made significant development progress in the past four decades, achieving strong economic development and political stability. With about 10 percent of the current world reserves of crude oil, it is a major economic force. Remaining development challenges relate to regional disparities, migration and high rates of greenhouse gas emissions.

UNDP has provided programme support in the areas of institutional and human resources development; integration into the global economy; protection, management and regeneration of natural resources and the environment; economic and social development; and governance.

The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2012.

**UNDP IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2011: $16.2 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2011**

- Bilateral/multilateral: 2%
- Programme government: 93%
- Regular resources: 4%
- Vertical funds: 1%

**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY TYPE OF PROGRAMME, 2002-2011 ($ MILLIONS)**

- Substantive engagement: 1
- Primarily administrative or logistics support: 14

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The current context of the United Arab Emirates required UNDP to take a purposeful and strategic approach, adapted to national expectations and driven by the fundamental principles of sustainable human development. National stakeholders value UNDP for its neutrality and impartiality. But despite having a programme presence for two decades, UNDP has not positioned itself favourably to further development objectives.

UNDP primarily provided administrative and logistical services; only a few projects aimed for more substantive engagement. Severe limitations were evident in leveraging service-related interventions for a more strategic role in policy support and in strengthening institutions and human resources.

UNDP’s lack of capacity for long-term and sustained engagement in the key areas of energy, environment and climate change, public administration and gender equality meant that in many cases, the Government preferred to work with other agencies or consultancy firms. Reducing the carbon footprint and renewable energy are on the top of the agenda, for example, but UNDP did not tap its corporate expertise or mobilize support to engage in high-level environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Only a few activities related to environmental issues took place, such as on environmental monitoring and law enforcement.

Several factors contributed to programme shortfalls, including gaps in professional staff. The lack of national staff in particular was a major issue, constraining efficiency and sustained engagement with the Government and other national stakeholders. Further, UNDP did not develop partnerships with leading research and policy institutions to access expertise required on short notice.

The UNDP development contribution could have been significantly higher had it not missed a number of key opportunities—most importantly, to support national efforts aimed at strengthening governance, economic prosperity and service delivery in the northern emirates. UNDP did not establish partnerships with the northern emirates, which have greater need for development services and support. In instances where official agreements were established, much of what was promised or expected was not fulfilled.

A significant intervention involved the emirate level Sharjah and Abu Dhabi human development reports. These generated interest in possibly producing a national human development report, and may have allayed cynicism among some government representatives regarding the usefulness of the reports. Better synergies with other UNDP initiatives, however, such as the Arab Knowledge Report project, were needed.

A key factor affecting overall programme coherence was the lack of a clear understanding of the real value added by UNDP and a similar lack of a realistic assessment of the agency’s comparative strengths in an increasingly competitive environment. Even national
partners who worked with UNDP were only aware of the activities they were directly involved with, and were uncertain of UNDP’s mandate or activities. The few stakeholders familiar with UNDP construed the absence of core resources as a lack of interest in the country’s development discourse.

In other countries that, like the United Arab Emirates, have become net contributors to UNDP, the organization has maintained relevance due to countries’ regional aspirations, such as European Union accession or Gulf Cooperation Council integration processes. This did not seem to be the case in the United Arab Emirates.

UNDP was detached from international and regional discourses, such as the increasing role of the United Arab Emirates in development and humanitarian aid. The country has made many efforts to systematize its aid, and UNDP could have facilitated cooperation with the global South, particularly in Africa and Asia. Its extensive presence in more than 135 countries makes it an appropriate agency to be involved in these issues, but UNDP has yet to explore the sharing of best practices with other countries. A concerted effort is needed to devise and enable a system for sharing knowledge.

Despite immense potential for developing funding partnerships for its global programme, UNDP did not have systems in place for structured resource mobilization, coordinating project monitoring or providing periodic reports. A more structured approach would include a strategy tailored to the Arab States and the region’s four top international development and humanitarian assistance donors, which include Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia alongside the United Arab Emirates. Such a strategy should unite an effective presentation of UNDP’s work with systems for monitoring, reporting and communications.

The absence of regular and predictable funding challenged UNDP effectiveness and constrained more structured programming. UNDP needs to break out of this trap if it is to develop long-term local relationships, contribute to national development and facilitate aspirations in the United Arab Emirates to support development in countries where such assistance is needed and requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should demonstrate a strong commitment to strategically engaging on key development issues and to furthering global development partnerships. Responsiveness to United Arab Emirates expectations to provide services to government agencies is one option, but not the only option, given UNDP comparative advantages.
- UNDP needs to make a strong commitment to support the northern emirates in addressing their development priorities and to contribute to bridging the developmental gap among the emirates. It should support a human development report for the northern emirates and work on setting up a field presence, if requested to do so.
- UNDP should strengthen the country office’s capacities to fulfil high-quality service needs. In addition to core staff, UNDP should build a network of professionals and use their expertise in delivering effective and timely services. The Government’s expectations include services related to technical expertise and procurement.
- UNDP should make it a priority strategic goal to attract and develop an experienced workforce of nationals in the country office, who can take the lead in research, technical and advisory services.
- UNDP should develop a resource mobilization strategy tailored to the United Arab Emirates. This strategy should include an effective presentation of UNDP work, areas that UNDP can support, and fund management systems for monitoring, reporting and communications.
- The country office should realistically assess headquarters support, particularly when the United Arab Emirates needs high-quality professional support at an accelerated pace. UNDP should make concerted efforts to build mutually beneficial and sustained partnerships with local and regional research and policy institutions whose capabilities can be leveraged to improve country office capacities. It should seek opportunities to work together with other UN agencies based on comparative advantages and overall contributions to development results.
- UNDP should strengthen systems for programme management. This should include establishing clear guidelines for accountability and reporting within the country office and with clients. Engaging in global development partnerships also requires strengthening the country office’s media and communications capacities.

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The declaration of a new State, the Republic of Yemen, in 1990 merged two economically depressed territories with distinct political orientations. Yemen is a least developed country, but despite a pressing need for aid, it is neglected by development partners. Daunting problems include high population growth, low levels of literacy, pronounced gender inequalities and severe constraints on water supplies. Amid a bleak employment picture, about half the population is poor. Political stability is very high on the national agenda, requiring action in the areas of democratization, rule of law, conflict resolution and power sharing with local councils. Diversification of the economy also demands urgent attention.

UNDP has provided programmes linked to key dimensions of governance, poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2004.

UNDP had a high profile in both Yemens before their unification, giving it a position of advantage despite a resource squeeze in the 1990s. Priority concerns of the Government coincided with areas of UNDP support. The trust, respect and neutrality commanded by the organization and the access it enjoyed among government officials as well as civil society groups enabled it to take on an advocacy role and pioneer new initiatives. Other strengths included its ability to help build institutions and capacity.

UNDP electoral assistance in 2003 increased voter registration, encouraged more women to vote and prevented incidents of voter-related violence. The Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda has become a stronger, more professional organization, and has set up offices in the governorates. In the justice system, UNDP helped establish various legal codes, and train judges and lawyers. A national mine action programme achieved reasonable success in raising awareness and clearing about 20 percent of critically mined areas.

UNDP and the UN Capital Development Fund partnered with the Government to develop an overall strategy for decentralization and build necessary capacity for implementation. Local leaders as well as government officials have been trained, phased planning was underway to strengthen local infrastructure, and pilot projects were launched in selected districts. UNDP acted as a bridge-builder between central and local authorities, and between local authorities and the local population. It successfully drew more development partners into the programme and secured increased financial allocations for local government from the Ministry of Finance.

While the decentralization programme is very promising for both empowering people at the grass-roots and attacking the vicious cycle of poverty, however, many challenges lie ahead, including in ensuring eventual government takeover.

UNDP played a vital role in supporting the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), in addition to activities relating to poverty policies, monitoring and evaluation. Databases and information systems, including a consolidated database of socioeconomic indicators, enabled the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to set up a special unit to monitor poverty. The ministry issued the first report on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and produced a progress report on the PRSP.

Starting in 1998, UNDP supported a community-based regional development initiative that successfully organized community development organizations.
and developed community-based financial services. The Social Fund for Development, set up in 1997, is now taking over responsibility for these programmes. The Fund is involved in developing social and economic infrastructure in communities; building the capacity of community development organizations, NGOs, consultants, contractors and government agencies; and promoting microenterprises and financial services.

Early on, UNDP responded to environmental challenges in Yemen, and its efforts in the 1990s increased national awareness of environmental issues. A National Water Resources Authority was created in 1995/1996, and in 2003, a Ministry of Water and Environment was set up. A National Environment Action Plan was finalized in 2002, and a Water Strategy and Investment Plan approved in December 2004. Funds from the Global Environment Facility were allocated for the protection of the marine ecosystem of the Red Sea, but results were limited, mainly because the project failed to focus on the loss of marine biodiversity. With Yemen threatened by a variety of natural disasters, UNDP is currently involved in assisting with disaster management plans.

Strategic partnerships forged by the organization have been of great benefit, including in strengthening the Government’s leadership role in the PRSP process. A number of South–South technical cooperation activities included exchanges between Yemeni and Jordanian microfinance institutions. Besides technical cooperation, however, Yemen needs a substantial injection of capital investment, however, which has not been forthcoming from either donors or foreign direct investment. UNDP in the past has been a substantial mobilizer of resources. It is still viewed as a significant player in supporting the Government in aid mobilization and coordination.

While a few programmes supported by UNDP have done relatively well, follow-up action is still needed; in others, improvements can be made and new opportunities exploited. There is still potential to exploit the knowledge resources at UNDP’s disposal and fresh attention should be directed there.

Success depends largely on combining upstream and downstream activities. UNDP should sustain a long-term commitment to its objectives, even as it remains flexible enough to respond to emerging issues and keeps a clear focus due to resource limitations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should continue to focus on the overarching issue in Yemen’s development, namely poverty alleviation. Key points for future emphasis include deepening and expanding the consultative and participatory process in the preparation of the 2006–2010 PRSP; ensuring that microfinance operations are sustainable, reach the rural poor, and provide models for well-functioning microfinance institutions; and accelerating social investment.

- In governance, UNDP’s influence could be more far-reaching, not so much through programme funding but by bringing in other actors, such as the UN Department for Political Affairs and its Electoral Assistance Division, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other development partners. Three areas of focus can be readily identified: the second phase of the decentralization programme; special initiatives on human rights, reforms in the justice system, election reforms and mine action, with the objective of developing national capacity; and the further consolidation of central national authority, which could be achieved by combining advocacy, international attention and conflict resolution mechanisms.

- A new programme on gender should be initiated, incorporating advocacy, partnership development and affirmative action as well as corrective measures for gender equality.

- In the area of the environment, UNDP’s contribution need not necessarily involve financial resources or technical expertise. Rather, its most important role may be flagging the importance of the environment for the country as a whole. Areas of focus should include resource mobilization, capacity development, partnership-building, and programme coordination and monitoring.

- External resource accounting and coordination should be given added emphasis. This is a traditional area of aid coordination that needs to be re-engineered. Aid accounting should be comprehensive, financial transactions should be transparent, budget allocations should reflect planning priorities, and technical and capital assistance should be matched.

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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN (2009)
AFGHANISTAN (2014)
BANGLADESH (2005)
BANGLADESH (2011)
BHUTAN
CAMBODIA
CHINA (2005)
CHINA (2010)
INDIA (2002)
INDIA (2012)
INDONESIA
LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (2006)
LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (2011)
MALAYSIA
MALDIVES
MONGOLIA
NEPAL
PACIFIC ISLANDS
PAKISTAN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
PHILIPPINES
SRI LANKA
THAILAND
TIMOR-LESTE
VIET NAM (2003)
VIET NAM (2016)
After the Bonn Agreement of 2002, Afghanistan went through a period of hope and positive expectations, with a peak at the time of the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2005. From 2006 to 2007, the scenario changed with a deteriorating security situation, and the return of the Taliban and other insurgents.

The UNDP programme in Afghanistan is among its largest in terms of financial volume. Programmes have encompassed democracy and participation, rule of law and security sector reform, state-building, sustainable livelihoods, coordination and development management, and gender mainstreaming. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2008.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Afghanistan, international cooperation, including provided by UNDP, almost uniformly adopted a phased approach to reconstruction. An exclusive initial focus was on restoring security, early recovery and humanitarian activities. UNDP claimed a limited niche in ‘early recovery’ as the administrator of last resort for donor funds for sensitive tasks. After 2004, at the insistence of the Minister of Finance, UNDP was repositioned to strengthen the institutions of state.

UNDP contributions included support in preparing and passing a new Constitution; and the holding of Presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections. The organization and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) encouraged the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission for managing ongoing voter registration and future elections with UNDP in an advisory role.

Other assistance aided in establishing key institutions within Parliament; demobilizing and disarming militias; strengthening capacity in state institutions at the central, provincial and district levels; and reforming the civil service. The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission has devised a comprehensive strategy for civil service reform that included the introduction of a merit-based appointment and promotions system.

UNDP supported the functioning of the Afghan police force by managing the payment of salaries and developing national capacity to make the payments over time. It paid the salaries of civil servants and effectively developed the capacity of the Ministry of Finance to prepare the national budget, track most foreign funding, and manage expenditures under the national budget.

Support to the justice sector and other areas related to the rule of law included fostering accountability and transparency. Unlike any other actor in the justice sector, UNDP had projects at the national, regional, provincial, and district levels. But operating in the sector was not easy, and it was not clear that UNDP could provide significant value despite the obvious importance of having a multilateral agency in such a politically sensitive sector.

A common feature of international cooperation and UNDP in Afghanistan was a geographical focus on provinces with more pronounced security problems. This type of prioritization may fail to create strong incentives to reduce armed conflict, however.

Although the absence of jobs and sustainable livelihoods was a major factor behind insurgency, UNDP came to these issues relatively late. The National Area Based Development Programme aimed to create capacity for the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development to implement multisectoral development projects at the local level. Significant capacity was created in provin-
cial governments, with a programme presence in all 34 provinces. As many as 900 projects took place, mostly in the form of small-scale infrastructure and physical facilities. In 2007, the 'Kandahar Model' was developed for operations in conditions of extreme insecurity. It placed community leaders at the centre and prompted significant deconcentration of responsibility on a pilot basis.

A major effort to encourage gender equality and strengthen the role of women covered a wide range of areas. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs was rehabilitated and equipped, its staff trained, and two sets of gender training manuals developed. But activities were not buttressed with a training strategy or followed with monitoring and evaluation.

One universal criticism of UNDP was the inefficiency of its bureaucratic procedures. Much ill will was created as a result of massive delays in procurement, payments and other basic administrative tasks. Steps have been taken to improve administration, but the fundamental problem of inefficiency and procedural complexity is systemic.

Almost total dependence on external funding for the development budget renders it very difficult to ensure that once infrastructure and other projects are completed their recurrent budget burden can be accommodated from domestic revenue. In the rush to maintain deadlines, donors have succumbed to paying salaries and salary supplements. This results in a skewing of priorities towards those of the largest donors, competition for staff between projects, and a loss of capacity once external assistance ends. Some UNDP projects have sought to address this problem by phasing out the payment of salaries and salary supplements with a clearly defined exit strategy that builds on the systematic recruitment and training of new graduates.

Broad national development and poverty reduction strategies with a very wide agenda have been developed for Afghanistan in the recent years. Yet no comprehensive strategy with a strong focus on peace-building and conflict analysis has been devised by the United Nations or through international cooperation. Upon reflection, this could have been a major contribution of UNDP, particularly in an integrated mission setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should reorient its principal focus to secure provinces, with a view to demonstrating a development dividend. It should encourage bilateral donors to do the same.
- The duration of future country programmes in Afghanistan as well as of capacity-building programmes should be commensurate with their longer term objectives. UNDP should also undertake a systematic review of its existing projects to eliminate or reorient those not focused on the achievement of UNAMA objectives.
- UNDP should widen its emphasis in governance from ‘state building’ to ‘nation building’, developing the role of civil society organizations alongside those of the institutions of state.
- Experience gained in other post-conflict settings and in nation building by UNDP and other organizations should be brought to bear, particularly on economic growth, pro-poor development and sustainable livelihoods; and development of civil society as an integral part of a broader governance strategy for Afghanistan.
- UNDP should create a technical advisory team to provide regular support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Deputy SRSGs.
- Building on the Kandahar Model, UNDP should promote gradual decentralization of decision-making, budget management and service delivery by all institutions of the Government.
- If UNDP is to continue to perform an administrative role on behalf of bilateral donors, it urgently needs to increase its flexibility, responsiveness and effectiveness.
- There is an urgent need for a coordinated effort to develop a coordinated policy on paying government salaries, moving away from cash incentives to civil servants, and moving away from project implementation units.
- Greater use should be made of UN specialized organization execution in the area of sustainable livelihoods.
- UNDP should better integrate with, and support UNAMA in development governance, coordination and peacebuilding, in particular establishing at least one regional liaison officer in each region.
- UNDP should help establish a programme to build country-level monitoring and evaluation capacity geared to identifying credible outcome indicators for UNDP interventions. This programme should have sufficient resources to collect and analyse such data on an ongoing basis.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Conflict in Afghanistan dates back to 1978 and continues to flare. The 2004 Constitution created a presidential form of government and a bicameral legislature, and generous donor funding has backed reconstruction and noticeable gains in health, education, the power supply and gender equality. But services outside major cities remain limited, local governance structures have never been created, and a struggling economy left 42 percent of people living below the poverty line in 2014, up from 33 percent in 2005.

UNDP’s 2010-2014 Country Programme aimed at fostering good governance, peace and stability; and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Interventions to achieve these two outcomes comprised support to the rule of law, demobilization and disarmament, direct support to key democratic events, institutional development and capacity-building, and poverty reduction and the provision of basic social services. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2009 to 2014.

Afghanistan has UNDP’s largest country programme, and the organization has played an extensive, very visible role in the country’s reconstruction. Accomplishments have included the demobilization and disarmament of ex-combatants, paying and training the national police force, supporting electoral processes, funding infrastructure development at the district level, and building the capacity of numerous state institutions.

UNDP’s goals during the 2010-2014 Country Programme would have been ambitious in normal circumstances. Given Afghanistan’s difficult security conditions and complex political situation, it was inevitable that the programme would fall short in some aspects.

A long-term presence, political neutrality and transparent accounting for funds uniquely qualified UNDP to implement a wide variety of governance, state-building and security-related programmes. But few interventions addressed sustainable livelihoods and the need for job creation. Assistance was largely confined to cities and central institutions. UNDP approached its massive capacity development portfolio in a disjointed manner, attempting to stop-gap institutional capacity rather than supporting the resolution of structural issues faced by the civil service.

UNDP’s close association with the Government corresponded to the organization’s mandate and approach, and is aligned with the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Insufficient ties with civil society, however, resulted in missed opportunities to support active organizations that could lobby for improved services, gender equality and accountable government.

UNDP has faced a number of disadvantages in Afghanistan, including the perceptions that it is accustomed to the role of service provider, competes with the Government for donors’ funds, lacks substance and independence, and has insufficient capacity for tangible results. Very few key development results to which UNDP contributed are sustainable beyond international support. Programmes have relied on the assumption that the organization is in the country over the long term.

Even the generally lauded National Area-Based Development Programme suffered from this problem, for instance, by supporting the creation of local infrastructure without sufficient attention to operations and maintenance. Donor-funded temporary civil service personnel, referred to as non-Tashkeel staff, solved capacity gaps in the short term, but very few were transferred into permanent Tashkeel positions. One exception was the
The strategic coherence of UNDP’s capacity development initiatives should be strengthened through stronger partnerships, including with Afghan indigenous governance systems, building on the organization’s comparative advantages as a provider of governance support. These systems remain a bedrock of Afghan society, and helping to reconcile central and traditional governance and conflict resolution systems could hold some of the keys to future political stability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP needs to continue to rebuild confidence with the Government and its donors.
- UNDP should continue to prioritize democratic governance and the rule of law, but must devote greater attention to local governments, the legislature and the judiciary, and should try to contribute more convincingly to the fight against poverty and (where possible) environmental protection.
- UNDP should examine the possibility of setting up additional multi-donor, multilateral trust funds.
- UNDP should strengthen its involvement in aid coordination forums and processes.
- UNDP Country Office management should, as a matter of priority, improve operational capacity and programme effectiveness by rebuilding a cohesive team of national and international staff.
- Subnational governance and service delivery should continue to be a major component of the programme. To that end, UNDP should also establish regional offices that can better integrate UNDP project activities.
- Specific attention needs to be paid to engaging with customary Afghan governance and judicial systems, which may not be up to international standard but have the important advantages of legitimacy and efficacy.
- The strategic coherence of UNDP’s capacity development initiatives should be strengthened through stronger support to the Public Administration Reform process. Sustainability of capacity-building results needs more serious consideration. UNDP should consider a gradual increase in national implementation.
- UNDP should reduce its exposure to poor security conditions, by outsourcing some activities, in particular monitoring and evaluation, and by moving some administrative functions outside the country. It could also consider disengaging itself responsibly from its riskiest programme, the largely ineffective APRP.
- The Country Office urgently needs to expand its communications capacity.
- UNDP should reach out to civil society, including through regular information events during the build-up to the elections and by involving carefully selected NGOs as programme implementers, primarily at the provincial and district levels, but also in lobbying, awareness-raising and civic education efforts.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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As the world’s second largest less developed country, Bangladesh is clearly a crucial player in the global fight against poverty. It has made significant progress in reducing human poverty and improving macroeconomic fundamentals as well as social indicators. Preventing reversals and sustaining gains achieved over the past decade poses challenges on many fronts, however, including accelerating inequalities, a deteriorating governance situation, environmental degradation, recurring natural disasters and the impending phase out of the Multi Fibre Agreement.

UNDP support has encompassed programmes on poverty alleviation, the environment and governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1996 to 2004.

UNDP has been a longstanding supporter of environmental issues in Bangladesh, and built on this background to support the Government in preparing the National Environmental Action Plan. An intensely participatory process created broad based ownership, and prompted a series of measures such as a ban on plastic bags and vehicle conversions to reduce air pollution.

To help operationalize activities foreseen in the Plan, UNDP launched a $26 million initiative that included advocacy and awareness raising as well as successful subnational initiatives. One prominent example was the Solid Waste Management Project. UNDP also played a key role in developing the Water Resources Management Act and the National Forestry Policy; conservation of the Sundarbans; and integrated pest management and national land use policies.

When UNDP has gained a high level of respect in a given area in Bangladesh, it has gone beyond advocacy to consensus-building and coordination of multilayer inputs. This was the case with the Human Security Report, which provided an in-depth analyses of the human security situation and legal framework for human security in Bangladesh. Covering sensitive issues such as the obstacles faced by the poor in accessing justice and dealing with the police, it was followed by the Police Reform Project in partnership with Government.

A local government project in Sirajganj was selected by the Government for scaling up based on its success in engaging local people in local development processes. The project resulted in more effective use of local resources and increased revenue mobilization, among other achievements.

Operating in a politically polarized context required cultivating relationships with pro-development elements in the Government. UNDP successfully balanced the recognition that the Government is led by the elected representatives of the people with the fact that serious concerns over the state’s accountability to its constituents persist. It chose to undertake “neutral” initiatives to help the poor, while also maintaining strict neutrality in taking on some sensitive issues, such as activities in contested areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society mobilization have greatly contributed to human development achievements in Bangladesh. UNDP provided a useful platform for active NGOs to engage in dialogue with the Government. Some difficulties in undertaking large, multisectoral initiatives, however, arose in terms of managing relationships with the Government and coordinating a number of NGO partners.

UNDP has benefited from the service delivery capabilities of NGOs. Closer collaboration with proactive, experienced and credible NGOs should include their involvement in identifying and conceptualizing appropriate initiatives. This could help UNDP avoid mistakes such as it encountered in community empowerment projects, which were closed when it became apparent...
that other organizations offered greater expertise in this arena. The expert panel of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme would be a useful model for the future.

Country office management often faced a conflict between the headquarters’ requirement to spend core resources to the available ceiling, and the need to move upstream and engage in more advocacy and policy formulation initiatives. Upstream activities consume much more staff time but are unlikely to generate high core expenditures. Downstream projects are more likely to relieve delivery concerns.

Continued strengthening of the two-way link between local initiatives and upstream efforts will continue to be vital to the effectiveness of UNDP support. Experience at the field level, for instance, lends credibility at the national level, as has been the case in the environment portfolio. In selecting pilot initiatives, UNDP should keep in mind its comparative advantage and the potential for influence on national policy making, along with cost effectiveness, local capacity and broad-based participation.

Strengthening UNDP’s contribution to development effectiveness is only possible if there is rigorous use of available evidence about what works and what fails. Within the Management for Results framework, existing monitoring systems must be systematically expanded to cover outputs and, where possible, indicators of success associated with delivery. Evidence need not be collected only from within UNDP’s own evaluation and assessment mechanisms. NGOs active in practically every village could be sources of information.

UNDP has overcome earlier programme delivery challenges and effectively mobilized external resources while improving its strategic focus. Moving forward, it can do more to address the emerging priorities of the country, including in championing policy alternatives for pro-poor growth to counter the accelerating rise in inequalities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In order to address the rising inequalities in income (and some social sector indicators), UNDP should continue to target the poorest of the poor. To this end, it should continue its efforts in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and hopefully, after completing the initial investment in establishing the organizational infrastructure, more resources will directly flow towards development of “safer” areas. While the team clearly recognizes the risks involved and the need to move with caution, it should be possible to set a clearer picture by conducting a needs assessment in partnership with other actors and by developing a coherent development strategy.

- Given the political sensibilities, a National Human Development Report may not be feasible. However, given the rise in inequalities, particularly geographic inequalities, UNDP may make a significant contribution using its comparative advantage and initiate developing a human development atlas – a GIS-based statistical compendium that could provide detailed disaggregated indicators at the subnational level.

- UNDP has made significant headway in the environmental sector at the upstream and downstream level. Clearly, its contributions have been greatly strengthened by its partnership with proactive NGOs and the media. UNDP could institutionalize this link by inviting key NGO actors to be part of its advisory panels.

- UNDP needs to support the ongoing country efforts to diversify exports and to strengthen the non-tradable sector. Already, UNDP has lost its high profile in policy dialogue. To regain its profile, it needs to shift gears in planning its poverty alleviation strategies and advocacy efforts. Clearly, as the first step, additional capacity in the form of trained economists is needed. UNDP should seek to establish its own comparative advantage in specializing in capacity development of the non-tradable sector.

- UNDP should focus its limited resources more on “safe” initiatives in its area of comparative advantage. Thus at the upstream level, it should continue its support to election monitoring efforts but emphasize strengthening local capacities to undertake monitoring. At the downstream level, it should focus more on local governance.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Natural disasters, food shocks and financial market shocks made Bangladesh particularly susceptible to slippages in meeting growth, poverty reduction and human development targets. Other shocks have been of a political nature. The country’s desire to transition to middle-income status now underscores the need to pursue a strategy of accelerated growth with improved governance.

UNDP programmes covered the issues of economic growth and poverty alleviation, democratic governance and human rights, reduction of social and economic vulnerability, sustainable environment and energy management, and promoting gender equality and the advancement of women. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2006 to 2010.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2010: $404.7 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010

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PROPOSED RESOURCES BY THEMATIC AREAS, 2006-2011 ($ MILLIONS)

- Responding to HIV/AIDS: $4.3
- Crisis prevention and recovery: $16.8
- Fostering democratic governance: $19.6
- Energy and environment for sustainable development: $28.2
- Achieving MDGs and reducing poverty: $45.3

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A period of political uncertainty under successive caretaker governments from 2006 to 2008 led to some disruptions, but UNDP still made significant contributions to a number of key development results in Bangladesh. Important and timely support to elections led to the registration of more than 81 million voters in just 11 months, for example. A partnership with the Bangladesh Election Commission entailed legislative and policy reform, the country’s first biometric photo voter registration, constituency delimitation, construction of independent local electoral centres and the provision of translucent ballot boxes. National and international observers hailed the historic return to democracy with free, fair and credible elections in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

In several areas, UNDP supported efforts with the potential to be transformative. These include its contribution to placing human rights on the policy agenda and institutionalizing it in the National Human Rights Commission, the first body of its kind. Other support backed police reform, based on respect for the rule of law, human rights and equitable access to justice, and helped advance the decentralization process.

UNDP assisted one of the Government’s flagship social safety net programmes, providing wages, savings, and livelihood training for the rural poor and vulnerable people, specifically women, through links with local governments, community partnerships and service delivery. An innovative poverty alleviation graduation strategy delivered long-term improvements, providing not just safety nets but also safety ladders out of poverty. Deploying social mobilization as a tool for urban poverty reduction encouraged groups of residents of slums and low-income settlements to identify, plan and manage local infrastructure and socioeconomic projects.

In the post-conflict Chittagong Hill Tracts region, a multisectoral peacebuilding and service delivery programme pursued accelerated, sustainable socioeconomic development and poverty reduction based on principles of local participation and decentralized development. The programme built the capacities of local institutions and community groups to plan and execute small-scale income generation projects, and expanded the quality and reach of services from education to health.

Interventions to reduce social and economic vulnerability strengthened government efforts to streamline disaster management efforts and achieve a total risk reduction approach, grounded in community awareness and participation. This was a paradigm shift away from an earlier focus on emergency relief. Policy advice, technical assistance and community-level interventions...
helped to improve the capacity of the Government, and local communities and institutions to prepare, respond to and ‘build back better’ from natural disasters.

Efforts to address environmental degradation seem to have lost momentum, possibly through a shift towards climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as disaster risk reduction. Climate change is a very important issue, but environmental degradation is still responsible for poverty and poor standards of living.

Although UNDP largely succeeded in mainstreaming gender in all its programmes, and made substantial contributions, many needs, especially in vulnerable communities, remained largely unaddressed. The absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms means that pathways towards gender equality cannot be assessed properly.

Most interventions reflected national development priorities. UNDP also built on its comparative strengths of neutrality and closeness to the Government in helping to address difficult issues. It was invited by the Government to participate in the reform process during a critical time. Policy shifts and a lack of government support at appropriate levels, however, have undercut UNDP contributions.

A multistakeholder approach proved valuable, but more needs to be done to cement broad partnerships across all projects. The Sustainable Environment Management Programme brought together 21 partner agencies within the government and civil society. It was the first programme in Bangladesh in which so many actors sought to link environment and major development and poverty reduction strategies.

UNDP played multiple roles—in project implementation and policy advice, as a fund provider and service provider, etc.—and in some areas a more appropriate balance could have been achieved. Advocacy was important and effective in the areas of human rights, judicial reform, elections and local governance, but could have been more pronounced in socially complex projects demanding long-term improvements in governance conditions.

Programmes did not always adequately focus on ensuring sustainability through stronger institutional linkages and capacity development. The ongoing move to backing nationally implemented reforms needs to be encouraged. More attention should be paid as well to the institutional sustainability of community organizations, particularly in poor rural and urban areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• To remain relevant, UNDP should continue to align its programme with national development priorities, specifically the Sixth Five-Year Plan and the framework of Joint Country Strategy.
• Appropriate exit strategies need to be built into the programmes and projects to strengthen the potential for sustainability.
• UNDP, together with national partners, should undertake periodic adjustments of innovative projects in light of experience.
• UNDP should strengthen its advocacy role, especially in areas that directly promote UN values such as human rights and gender equality.
• UNDP should try to avoid ‘fragmentation effects’ by providing adequate emphasis on both developmental and social cohesion needs within and across communities.
• The issue of shock prevention to avoid income erosion needs to be given more attention in future UNDP programmes, which currently focus mainly on income generation.
• Given its long-term commitment to Bangladesh, UNDP should build on its success in addressing practical gender needs to explicitly move to the more challenging task of supporting strategic gender needs.
• UNDP should play an important role in promoting regional cooperation on environmental and disaster management issues among South Asian countries in general, and between India and Bangladesh in particular.
• Comprehensive disaster management programmes of UNDP need to focus more on supporting the livelihoods of the poor within an asset livelihood framework (extended by rights to development of the poor) in design when it comes to the issue of revival of the local economy.
• UNDP should continue to focus on environment-related issues like pollution and degradation of natural resources to ensure sustainable development and poverty reduction.

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BHUTAN

Bhutan is in the midst of a historic transition from a monarchy to a full-fledged democracy. Since ending its self-imposed isolation in 1961, the country has achieved a medium stage of human development. Policy-making and programming are uniquely guided by the concept of gross national happiness, which emphasizes sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development, conservation of the environment, preservation and promotion of culture, and promotion of good governance. Remaining priority challenges include the need to eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities and generate employment.

UNDP has contributed mainly to five programmatic areas: governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, gender equity and natural disaster reduction.

The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2000 to 2005.

UNDP has, over the years, established an extremely positive relationship with the Royal Government of Bhutan, characterized by mutual trust, respect and constructive engagement. By and large, the organization is seen as a catalyst that keeps pace with changing national and local needs.

Public policy in Bhutan is guided by the concept of gross national happiness which, in many ways, complements UNDP’s idea of human development. The Government has been open to new ideas and shown an eagerness to learn from local and international experiences. Also important has been the acceptance of UNDP’s leadership role by development partners. Round-table meetings, co-chaired by the Government and UNDP, have been useful for consultations with assistance partners on issues of common interest.

Under a comprehensive national development framework, UNDP has explored new approaches, mobilized technical assistance, conducted studies to inform policy and programming, and brought lessons learned from the field to inform policy-makers. It has made important contributions through supporting the Government with work related to international conventions, the preparation of Millennium Development Goal Reports and National Human Development Reports, and advocacy of the concept of gross national happiness. Assistance to enhance institutional capacity in the public sector has included support to the National Commission for Women and Children, a serious attempt to address issues affecting women (including domestic violence) and to advance gender equality.

UNDP acquired a high profile for supporting government efforts to create an enabling framework and build capacities for decentralized, people-centred governance. It had a leading role in formulating the first framework linking the collective efforts of several partners in an integrated programme on decentralization.

By and large, UNDP scored well in terms of its upstream policy contributions. Much less visible, however, were contributions to downstream effectiveness and impact at the local level. At the project design stage, UNDP and the central Government must discuss and develop a decentralized system of programme implementation that can ensure effective flow and use of funds by local bodies. More focus is needed on scaling up strategies, especially where interventions start as pilot projects.

UNDP has lessons to offer in cultivating relationships with governments based on the work in Bhutan, where it chose not to ‘impose’ its own prescriptions, and partnered with the Government to carefully think through
and implement interventions. Close proximity to and dovetailing of UNDP’s programmes with those of the Government, however, made it difficult for UNDP to clearly identify what its specific contributions were to the country’s development. There was a feeling that UNDP’s interventions were small, scattered and unfocused. In addition, while UNDP has established strong ties with the central Government, this was not the case with local governments.

A number of challenges have stemmed from Bhutan’s complex topography. While physical infrastructure has expanded considerably over the years, it is still inadequate to ensure universal reach and effective delivery of basic social services, and to establish effective systems of local governance and connectivity to markets.

Speedy political reforms have greatly increased the need for administrative and managerial capacity as well as leadership at many levels of government; a lack of these, especially in local governments, constrains planning and implementation, as well as intersectoral convergence and coordination.

Where UNDP programme results did not occur according to plan, this appeared to be largely attributable to insufficient implementation capacities among institutions at the local level, exacerbated by the accelerating pace of reform. Other constraining factors were deficiencies in some UNDP institutional systems (for example, financial and reporting systems) and processes that limit institutional learning.

A stronger culture of results-based management could make continuous monitoring and evaluation integral to performance assessment and reporting starting with a focus on the changes that UNDP is aiming to bring about, rather than on what is being done. Further, given the rapidly changing external environment, it is necessary for UNDP to constantly review the underlying pathways of change that guide its programming efforts.

In the years to come, UNDP’s contribution will be determined increasingly by the extent to which it informs public decision making by drawing on its global knowledge of what works and what doesn’t. The organization has tapped a broad range of expertise available in its headquarters, regional centres and across UN agencies, but this process can be done better and more systematically, towards UNDP rapidly transforming itself into an effective knowledge organization.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There is considerable room for UNDP to improve its ability to assist the Government in identifying and articulating policy choices.
- UNDP should rearticulate a theory of change, including to strike a better balance between upstream and downstream interventions.
- There is a need to formalize and improve knowledge creation, management and dissemination. In addition, UNDP could play a constructive role in encouraging knowledge networks within the country.
- UNDP should pay special attention to national development challenges that are likely to assume importance in the coming decade. This would include anti-corruption, good governance, leadership, culture and ethics.
- The results-based approach and Multi-Year Funding Framework have helped to sharpen UNDP’s work towards outcomes, but they still need to be better internalized to become more outcome and less process orientated.
- UNDP support and impact downstream need to be made more effective and obvious. Assessing downstream contribution should be improved by better monitoring at the project level, specifying clear methodologies in project evaluation and resolving conflicting views on the effectiveness of partnerships.
- UNDP should work towards improving efficiency as well as government capacity at central and local levels to deal with the demands of implementation.
- Better monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management systems are needed to maximize UNDP’s impact.
- Given the resource pressures on the Government, UNDP can assist by better leveraging its resources to mobilize additional external funds and help with priority setting.
- UNDP should and make the round-table meetings an even more effective forum for development dialogue.
- More effective mechanisms to build bridges and promote harmonization between UNDP and its development partners will require more actively promoting management practices that are results oriented and harmonized.
- The Resident Coordinator and UNDP should advocate for the set of universal values enshrined in the Millennium Declaration as incorporating these values into its policies will be critical for Bhutan.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Cambodia has undertaken a triple transition from conflict to peace, from autocracy to democracy, and from a centrally planned economy to market-based economic development. Despite enormous challenges, and while remaining a poor country, Cambodia has achieved considerable economic success in the past decade. Various social indicators related to health, education and other social services also point towards improving trends.

UNDP has provided support in such diverse areas as aid coordination, democratization, decentralization, environmental conservation, and poverty alleviation through employment creation. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2010.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2006-2010: $173.6 MILLION

### FUNDING SOURCES, 2006-2010

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### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY OUTCOME, 2006-2008 ($ MILLIONS)

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<td>Environmental management, energy development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other outcomes</td>
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<td>Reinforced democratic institutions</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Mine action</td>
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<td>Democratic local governance</td>
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### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Across the spectrum of UNDP activities in Cambodia, a great deal was achieved in building institutions and capacities. Yet outcomes were compromised by a lack of focus on people. In democratization and decentralization programmes, participation and empowerment remained limited; in environmental programmes, there was more emphasis on conservation than on sustainable livelihoods; in poverty-related programmes, more success was achieved in building capacity for market-led development than in creating employment opportunities.

Through the democratization programme, UNDP helped the Government implement major reforms in the electoral process, and the 2008 national elections were widely acknowledged to have been more ‘free and fair’ than the previous ones. Yet little effort was made to strengthen civil society organizations and thereby develop the democratic space for citizens at large.

Far-reaching contributions towards developing the structures and systems of decentralization and local governance sought to enhance people’s participation and improve the government’s ability to more effectively provide services. For the first time, this has made it possible for ordinary citizens to participate in local decision-making. The full potential of these structures and systems has yet to be fulfilled, however, with wide variance in participation among communes.

The environmental programme accomplished a great deal, but only a few specific pilot projects emphasized sustainable livelihoods by using the community-based natural resource management approach—with a good deal of success. In the biggest environmental project, for the Tonle Sap Basin, UNDP moved away from this approach. As a result, the Tonle Sap Project and several others showed considerable success primarily in conserving biodiversity. One possible reason for this imbalance lies in the excessive reliance of UNDP on the Global Environment Facility, which is primarily concerned with conservation, for financing its environmental projects.

Poverty-related activities have built capacity for private-sector led development through reliance on the forces of the market and globalization, but little was achieved in introducing a pro-poor bias. In choosing products for export, no special consideration was given to small producers, for instance. UNDP needs to be more involved in rural and agricultural development, where poverty is most heavily concentrated.
Along with other UN organizations, UNDP has helped Cambodia develop a sophisticated and unique institutional structure for mainstreaming gender in government departments and ministries. Gender mainstreaming action groups have been set up in a number of ministries; many have produced gender mainstreaming action plans, some of which have received budgetary support. Yet national capacity to manage this structure is severely limited. The most significant capacity development has occurred in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, but the ministry does not have enough human resources to support all gender mainstreaming action groups.

Potential synergies across programme areas could be exploited, such as between environmental and poverty projects. The wide-ranging effort to set up a decentralization structure should help make community-based initiatives more effective and efficient. If successful execution of community-based projects can be tied with local government planning, this would lend credibility and effectiveness to decentralization.

Strong partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders earned UNDP high regard. Yet sustaining strategic collaboration with other development partners is a challenging task, especially in a country where many agencies are competing. While UNDP generally met this challenge, areas of concern included the lack of consensus on the objective of the decentralization programme. Cambodia has an elaborate structure for aid coordination, and UNDP has played a vanguard role in developing institutional capacity to handle coordination, some parts of the system are not functioning as well as expected.

Efficiency could be enhanced by fully exploiting potential programme synergies and taking active steps to find partners to scale up pilot initiatives. The high rate of staff turnover has potentially deleterious effects.

While UNDP emphasizes capacity building, in practice this has been hampered by the de facto conversion of the national execution modality into the direct execution modality. Salary supplements for project staff raise questions about incentives beyond the project period.

Few countries have changed as radically as Cambodia has during the last two decades, and UNDP has been a steady partner in this change, responding to evolving needs. As successful as support has been, regular reflection is needed to maintain a focus on accelerating human development and real improvements in people’s lives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP needs to change its approach towards civil society, strengthening it with a view to developing capacities.
- UNDP should devise structures that forge the link between conservation and livelihood more effectively.
- To better integrate livelihood concerns into conservation projects, UNDP should forge partnerships with other agencies concerned primarily with human lives and livelihoods while pursuing environmental objectives.
- UNDP should introduce a more explicit pro-poor bias into its poverty reduction programme.
- To accelerate poverty reduction, UNDP should engage more in agricultural and rural development activities, preferably by entering into collaboration with other development partners.
- UNDP should exploit potential synergies among its programme areas to the fullest.
- UNDP successfully involves other development partners at the stage of execution and implementation of projects, but it needs to do more to ensure cooperation at the stage of project design.
- UNDP needs to do more to bridge the conceptual divide among its partners in decentralization projects, helping the Government devise an efficient system for combining governance reform with service delivery.
- UNDP could play a more active role in revitalizing aid coordination, making use of the goodwill it enjoys.
- To enhance UNDP’s ability to offer imaginative ideas quickly in response to changing country needs, it should restore the flexibility and quick response ability of the Insight for Action Initiative.
- To enhance effectiveness and efficiency, UNDP should move faster towards a programme-based approach.
- UNDP should make a systematic attempt to convert pilot initiatives into larger-scale activities, and seek out partners through whom the scaling up can be achieved.
- UNDP should make greater effort to separate technical support from capacity building support, and find innovative ways of combining the two in a synergistic rather than competitive relationship.
- UNDP should further strengthen its effort to mainstream gender in the work of sectoral ministries; the UN country team should also mainstream gender in work across the board.

### ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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Since 1979, China has been one of the most successful developing countries in the world and it has been by far the most successful of the transition economies. Systemic change has been achieved without having to go through a “transition depression,” and in fact, in no year has output or average income declined. Living standards have improved dramatically and the decline in poverty, in terms of the number of people affected and the speed of the decline, has been the greatest in world history. Rapid growth has been financed entirely by its own savings.

UNDP has provided support in the areas of governance, poverty reduction, gender equality, HIV/AIDS and energy and the environment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1996 to 2004.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Chinese Government sees UNDP as an “old friend” whose advice and activities are not guided by ideological considerations. It appreciates UNDP’s role in helping China become more “open” and closely integrated into the rest of the world. Despite the decline in the size of the UNDP programme, the Government would like the organization to continue to operate in the country.

Most UNDP projects were well designed and competently administered; in this sense, they were successful. But their overall impact was modest in the context of national priorities. This weakness arises from discussions between UNDP and its primary government counterpart, the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE), which historically occur on a project-by-project basis rather than on a strategic basis.

Some of UNDP’s achievements in governance were considerable. It contributed to policy change through providing advice and engaging in dialogue. It assisted in developing a master plan for public administrative reform and advisory reports on issues such as the prevention of corruption.

Poverty reduction was a high priority, with a large number of small projects, but some of the most important and lasting contributions consisted of UNDP’s analytical and advocacy work. Examples include publication of the national human development reports, careful monitoring of China’s efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and periodic analyses of poverty reduction policies and statistical indicators based on a concept of poverty that goes beyond income deprivation.

UNDP has been prominent in addressing the delicate issue of HIV/AIDS, advocating on behalf of those who became ill, initiating public discussion, and stressing the multiple dimensions of the AIDS threat and the multiplicity of actions required to meet it.

Although the allocation of resources to projects explicitly focused on gender was small, gender was a constant theme. The organization adopted a gender mainstreaming approach, yet it was not clear that the results were what was hoped. In some respects, gender issues seemed to have fallen through the cracks: if gender issues are the responsibility of everyone, they can easily become the responsibility of no one. A lack of gender-disaggregated data plus the crosscutting nature of gender issues has made UNDP policy advocacy difficult.

China faces serious environmental problems. It is striking, however, that UNDP’s energy and environment programme—by far its largest activity—was not integrated into its country programming. The programme was largely funded by the Montreal Protocol and the...
Global Environment Fund. In contrast with other UNDP programmes, priorities were strongly influenced by international rather than national objectives. This is true in other countries as well, but the anomaly was particularly glaring in China because, in general, UNDP assistance is demand driven rather than donor driven.

CICETE executes almost all UNDP projects, supervises implementing agencies (usually line ministries) and exercises financial control. This arrangement appeared to have worked reasonably well. It has been claimed that CICETE has a monopoly over discussions with UNDP, and that this hampers communications between line ministries and UNDP that would be mutually beneficial. In practice, CICETE has been flexible and communications among all interested parties have increased.

Another objection was that the current arrangements for administering UNDP assistance stifle innovation and discourage creative thinking about new types of projects. Again, however, little evidence was found to support this criticism. UNDP sponsored a number of innovative projects and addressed many sensitive issues in its advocacy work. Examples included an urban microcredit scheme, the promotion of female entrepreneurship, projects concerned with HIV/AIDS, several projects in the area of governance, and a proposed new project to train senior national and provincial officials of the Chinese Communist Party. A proposed International Poverty Centre could be a vehicle for conducting comparative studies of poverty in a number of Asian and African countries, and the focal point in China for south-south cooperation.

It takes patient negotiation and lengthy discussions to break new ground, introduce new concepts, and address sensitive issues, but this is normal and desirable and should not be seen as objectionable or obstructive. The issue is whether CICETE and UNDP, both with a history of a project oriented approach, can shift to upstream activities. China has changed dramatically in the 25 years since UNDP began operations there. The time has come to introduce radical changes in the way UNDP and the Government work together. A UNDP programme concentrating on knowledge, applied research and policy advocacy would reflect the reality that China does not need money; it needs ideas. UNDP could strategically position itself to contribute to the national debate on a range of policies central to the pursuit of sustainable human development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP can contribute to China’s development by working with the National Bureau of Statistics and others to improve the quantity and quality of information available to policy makers.
- UNDP can contribute by increasing the capacity in China for more sophisticated analysis of policy issues. This would include deployment of a wide range of statistical techniques, more frequent use of cost-benefit analysis and targeted sample surveys, as well as qualitative methods of analysis.
- UNDP should continue to provide informed policy advocacy in its areas of competence. This would include addressing sensitive and controversial issues such as governance and human rights, gender, health, poverty, inequality and sustainable development.
- There should be a shift of emphasis in the programme from many small, unrelated projects to upstream activities centred on creating knowledge, improving policy analysis and policy advocacy.
- In governance programmes, UNDP’s task will be to focus on one or two areas where rapid progress is judged to be possible and to ignore other areas for the time being.
- UNDP could make a major contribution to poverty reduction through improved statistics, assisting the Government with a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, analysis of major poverty-related issues, and continuing work on policy advocacy.
- UNDP should increase the scale of its operations on HIV/AIDS quite considerably towards an increase in information, more sophisticated economic and social analysis to determine more accurately the causes and consequences of the epidemic, and exploration of a range of policy options.
- UNDP should devote more resources to gender-disaggregated data and analysis, and be a strong advocate for increasing the representation of women in positions of power and authority.
- UNDP should redouble efforts to ensure that environment projects closely reflect mainstream government priorities, and focus on a limited number of larger scale initiatives that can have a nationwide impact.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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China has witnessed a remarkable transformation during the past 30 years towards the goal of Xiaokang—building a moderately prosperous harmonious socialist society. Impressive gains have been made across the dimensions of human development: income, health and education. Energy efficiency and energy-saving measures have been introduced, combined with structural changes in the economy to cut emissions. China still faces multiple challenges in the sustainability and inclusiveness of its growth, however.

UNDP has contributed to development results in poverty reduction, democratic governance, environment and energy, HIV and AIDS, and global partnerships. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2006 to 2009.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2009: $137 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2006-2009**

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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2008-2009 ($ MILLIONS)**

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<td>Sustainable energy and environment</td>
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**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The UNDP country programme was well aligned with national development priorities in China. UNDP acted on emerging needs and new opportunities, and contributed to a number of development results. Although core funds are limited and largely programmed, adequate mechanisms enabled a prompt response to key events, such as the major earthquake in Sichuan in 2008.

UNDP’s relevance stems from its contribution to United Nations goals and values in at least three areas. The first is the close alignment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with China’s own vision of a Xiaokang society. The second derives from gender equality being one of UNDP’s priorities, with stakeholders noting that they might not have adopted a gender perspective without continuous advocacy from UNDP. The third contribution derives from the special attention paid by UNDP to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, especially in the areas of poverty reduction, democratic governance and HIV/AIDS.

A re-orientation of the project portfolio increased effectiveness through a shift from a diverse conglomeration of projects to flagship programmes designed to inform and support policy-making and human development. UNDP placed greater emphasis on the central level and macro policy interventions, and paid greater attention to complex development issues such as the special needs of migrant workers and ethnic communities. It helped to better showcase China’s achievements globally by encouraging and supporting many initiatives that promote South-South cooperation and global exchange.

Important contributions by UNDP poverty reduction initiatives included integrating the MDGs into China’s vision of a Xiaokang society and strengthening the links between fiscal reforms and poverty reduction. Democratic governance projects, though relatively small in terms of financial commitments, contributed to capacity development, policy research and advocacy, helping to open space for civil society and enhance human rights protections for poor and disadvantaged groups. For the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, UNDP backed capacity development for planning and coordination, and helped strengthen leadership at various levels and develop new regulations.

Work on energy efficiency supported the commercialization and promotion of new and renewable energy technologies in industries, effectively brokering the mobilization of capital resources for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, and developing systems that improve coordination, working relationships, and performance among partners and government agencies. Assistance helped in finding market-linked and -based solutions to improving energy efficiency, and supported...
regulations, codes, guidelines, standards and labels for energy efficiency and conservation in some energy-consuming industries. The effective use of media increased awareness among the public, the government and the private sector.

Several significant outputs from biodiversity conservation projects stemmed from a focus on policy and legal reform, partnerships, engagement of civil society, financing mechanisms, institutional strengthening and influencing public opinion about the value of biodiversity. Mainstreaming biodiversity into planning and investment processes has made significant progress, and partnerships between the Ministry of Environmental Protection, civil society organizations and academia have been established for promoting biodiversity conservation.

During the past three decades, UNDP has cooperated with almost all central government departments, although engagement with provincial governments remains relatively weak. Strategic partnerships have also been forged with the private sector, think tanks, academia, media and national NGOs. Partnerships have effectively increased China’s international participation and cooperation, with a noteworthy example being the International Poverty Reduction Centre. UNDP helped establish the Centre and build its capacity to facilitate the sharing of China’s poverty alleviation experience with other developing countries, particularly in Africa.

There is considerable scope for improving programme management. While a majority of stakeholders were satisfied with it, they pointed to gaps in procedures as well as knowledge and competencies to tackle some complex issues. Top-level expertise to advise on policy matters in many development areas is not readily available. Further, UNDP monitoring and evaluation activities are not standardized, and there are few checks to control quality.

During the past three decades, UNDP cooperation in China has ranged over multiple topical and geographical areas. During this period, the nature of the cooperation has evolved considerably, and the interaction with governmental and other national partners at the central, provincial and local levels has widened. Overall, UNDP has become a trusted development partner to China due to its perceived impartiality and neutrality.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Refine the strategic vision that UNDP has articulated for China’s development, in close consultation with the Government. Limited UNDP resources should be used more strategically to catalyse public action in areas where need is greatest, and to mobilize additional resources for a country of such enormous size and diversity.
- Concentrate on three flagship interventions: Critical international issues, such as climate change, food security and a low carbon economy; critical domestic issues, such as human development, livelihoods, urbanization, migration and ageing; and China’s integration with the world.
- Ensure balance between upstream and downstream initiatives. There should be a systematic review of the experience, context and opportunities in each practice area as the basis for arriving at a balance. When engaged in upstream work, UNDP should facilitate the mainstreaming of the best practices of local projects and replicate innovative approaches.
- Retain existing good cooperation with key ministries in the central Government; actively involve local governments in the design and implementation of UNDP projects; and extend partnerships to civil society organizations and the private sector in a strategic and systematic manner.
- Further mobilize additional financial resources and engage in a round of discussions to develop a long-term perspective on funding for China’s development.
- Enhance UNDP capacity to match China’s needs, and to bridge the knowledge and information gap between international organizations and local partners. Realign staff and work culture to enhance organizational effectiveness and become a more rigorous, results-focused organization.
- Set up a unified programme and project information system, especially to manage projects with different funding sources.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, including through developing an outcome evaluation plan, and new methodologies to evaluate ‘soft interventions’.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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The Indian economy has performed impressively over the past two decades. Further, India today is the world’s largest democracy with a vibrant electorate, active Judiciary and civil society groups, and a fiercely independent media. Despite its many noteworthy achievements, the country faces several challenges. Economic growth is decelerating, the incidence of unemployment on a current daily basis is high, there is widespread undernourishment, and environmental problems are significant. Efforts are underway to address a variety of issues under the 10th Five-Year Plan.

UNDP support has centred on growth with equity, with poverty alleviation and human development as central concerns. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2002.

UNDP’s consistent support to people-centred development processes and effective advocacy of sustainable human development have established an image of impartiality and neutrality. In India, UNDP has sensitively calibrated its global agenda to suit local circumstances. This effort needs to be encouraged. The Government of India also needs to appreciate that while UNDP’s financial inputs may be modest, it has other unique strengths.

Important shifts in UNDP’s country strategy were made in order to encourage national capacity building and sustainability. There was a change from a project approach to a programme approach, a focus on long-term capacity building and institution-building at the community level rather than purely technical inputs, greater involvement of national expertise instead of reliance on international consultants, a shift to national execution and ownership by the Government, and stronger partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Nonetheless, a recurrent issue was the pursuit of multiple objectives and a large number of programmes and subprogrammes, which diffused focus, strained managerial resources, rendered monitoring and evaluation difficult, and led to sub-optimal utilization of resources. Education and health programmes, for example, were relatively small interventions compared to much larger programmes being implemented through other sources. In both sectors, UNDP can make only a limited impact. It needs to examine whether pilot interventions will make a distinctive contribution to new thinking.

Community-based pro-poor initiatives demonstrated many new and innovative approaches. They made several impressive achievements. Available evidence, however, suggested that they have been accompanied by intense managerial and technical inputs, a great deal of commitment, and external supervision for relatively small operations. It may not, therefore, be easy to replicate them. Given the fact that there are other, bigger players in the arena of poverty alleviation, a better strategy may be to widely share the experiences of UNDP-supported programmes. With their substantially larger funds, these actors can exercise greater influence in ensuring replication and mainstreaming of successful approaches.

Some beginnings have been made. For instance, under the District Poverty Initiative Programme, the World Bank has adopted the model of the UNDP South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme and has provided about $2 million for each district.

While programmes and subprogrammes were well designed and comprehensive, their preparation and approval tended to get delayed. Often, they were designed independently and functioned more or less in isolation from each other. Most did not seem to implement exit strategies. There were many instances of beneficiaries developing a dependency syndrome.

A programme to assist artisans in the leather sector was focused on poverty alleviation, sustained livelihoods, and building linkages between the organized and the unorganized sectors. The programme resulted in higher incomes, higher wages and availability of work throughout the year. The actual composition of beneficiaries suggests that women and the poorest workers were been directly targeted, however. The programme’s quality service was highly subsidized, at a level beyond the reach of most state governments, undercutting prospects for sustainability.

Despite a rights-based approach to gender equality in
programme and subprogramme documents, the focus on gender was strongest in community-based programmes implemented through NGOs, depending on their perspectives and skills. In some programmes, there was a risk of reinforcing traditional gender inequalities and biases. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks needed to be consciously gendered. UNDP has taken several steps to strengthen integration of gender into programmes, including capacity-building for programme teams and partners, and participatory exercises for gender impact assessment. These efforts need to be strengthened.

The recently published National Human Development Report, accompanied by a series of subnational reports, was a signal achievement of UNDP advocacy. Although the outlay for this project was small, it can make a significant difference in ensuring higher priority to issues of human development in public policies and development plans, particularly in the states, and in strengthening partnerships to fight poverty across the country. Reports need to be followed up by studies in priority areas, evaluation studies of specific programme interventions, etc. Further, while the global Human Development Report has been a vehicle for disseminating development lessons from India, more systematic and intensive action is needed to bring international experiences to India, and to share these within it.

To bring about synergies in collaborative efforts and long-term sustainability of programmes, there is a need to build partnerships and alliances at several levels, with special attention to state governments, district administrations, and panchayats. So far, these have not received adequate attention, although they have a decisive role in carrying programmes forward.

In general, UNDP’s efforts will be better rewarded if it focuses on indirect interventions, such as demonstration programmes and capacity building, backed by some direct interventions for hands-on experience. It needs to curb the temptation to undertake a large number of scattered initiatives, even if they are worthwhile, because only a concentrated effort can lead to a distinctive contribution and value addition.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Programmes should be developed around the objectives of India’s 10th Five Year Plan and the overarching goals of the United Nations in India.
- UNDP needs to sharpen its focus and choose only the most appropriate programmes. Subprogrammes should converge both thematically, focusing on a few clearly identifiable themes and objectives, as well as geographically. Intersectoral linkages need to be consciously developed.
- Programme design and implementation strategies should be redefined by undertaking a rigorous analysis of the aspects of class, gender and replicability. Otherwise, the poorest and the most vulnerable may be neglected, men may sabotage the process of women’s empowerment, and replication may not happen. Programme design should also incorporate rights-based perspectives.
- Exit strategies should be specified, with milestones for each stage of a given intervention.
- Communications and advocacy strategies should be strongly built into all programmes as a means of sharing best practice and ensuring replicability.
- Partnerships and alliances need to be built at several levels. Special attention needs to be given to building partnerships with the state governments, district administrations and panchayats.
- Greater attention must be given to ensure that UNDP interventions contribute to strengthening the links between NGOs and panchayats, and encourage transparency.
- Representatives of women’s groups and gender experts should be consulted in programme formulation. The Department of Women and Child Development and the National Commission for Women should be actively involved. Men need to be fully involved in programmes for ensuring gender equality at the community level.
- UNDP and the Government need to promote more effective networking among NGOs with proven expertise, field presence and competence in addressing critical issues. Focused efforts are also needed to develop these NGOs as resource centres and ‘mother NGOs’.
- Social mobilization is a complex process that requires time; this should be kept in view while designing programmes and working out the schedule for implementation.

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While a high growth rate has been among the clear achievements of the Indian economy in the past decade, there are areas of concern with respect to human development, where indicators are relatively poor. Combined with a remarkably vibrant democracy, this creates social and political pressures for policy changes towards greater economic justice. The Government is aware of the multidimensional challenges of ensuring inclusive growth.

UNDP has provided support on issues including inclusive growth, poverty reduction, gender equality, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the impact of AIDS, responsive governance, conflict and disaster risk management, and environment and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2011.

UNDP’s strengths in India emerge from its empathy, flexibility, and efforts to align its activities closely with national and government priorities. These strengths also generate some weaknesses, particularly in terms of overstretch and lack of focus. While UNDP has made efforts to achieve greater focus and reduce the proliferation of activities, this still remains a concern.

In the early phase covered under this evaluation, human development featured as a key organizing principle of UNDP’s work. The organization promoted the approach at the state level, and pioneered subnational Human Development Reports (HDRs) that were highly innovative and successful. In the country programme that began in 2008, this focus dissipated, and UNDP did not adequately follow up on its successes. More recently, there were signs that the human development focus was again being emphasized, which was highly welcome.

Such a cross-cutting organizational principle can help UNDP break the current silos among various programme areas and move towards better integrated, cross-thematic work with stronger impact. While individual projects usually fit into national priorities, there was relatively little collaboration or synergies among them.

Programme effectiveness was variable. Highly effective initiatives included the subnational Human Development Reports, which covered 15 states and 80 districts. In most parts of the country, UNDP is known largely because of these flagship reports, which were widely appreciated and contributed to policy discussions.

Projects to introduce energy efficiency in small-sector tea processing units and remove barriers to energy efficiency in steel re-rolling helped reduce emissions and make available more efficient processes and technologies in energy-intensive units in the informal sector. Other activities were less immediately effective. Work on access to justice and legal literacy, for example, despite the huge potential of the programme, did not take into account the need for long lead times to build linkages with state and central government legal authorities. An initiative to improve livelihoods in two districts of the state of Orissa was enthusiastically taken up by local authorities, but the project time frame was so short that the exercise mainly resulted in a sense of dissatisfaction with UNDP. Several livelihood projects
were not sufficiently conscious of the need to maintain core labour standards and were implemented in gender-insensitive ways.

The lack of strategic focus and synergies, short implementation periods and sudden stops without careful assessment of the requirements for the ‘last mile’ reduced effectiveness. In the areas of poverty reduction, and energy and environment, given the large number of national and international players interested in similar activities, UNDP needed to highlight the specific value added that it can bring.

There were concerns about delays in starting projects and excessively rigid project cycles. The office structure was too centralized, which prevented the acquisition of locally relevant knowledge in projects in different parts of the country, and did not allow for adequate supervision and monitoring of field projects.

The fragmented nature of the programme put heavy pressure on programme management, while the technical skills of staff were sometimes inadequate. This affected the choice of activities and partners, as well as the capacity to supervise and monitor particular projects, and hampered effectiveness, innovation and learning. In general, there was not enough external networking to ensure awareness of and responsiveness to wider social capacities and demands.

Detailed reporting requirements were very time-consuming and not always very useful. Monitoring and evaluation systems were not put into place or implemented effectively. The current results framework, largely based on a listing of numerical indicators, without an attempt at comparative or counter-factual analysis, does not allow for measuring and demonstrating results in a way that can be useful for future activities.

A major factor affecting both the visibility and sustainability of projects was the lack of engagement with local and state-level administrations, and the lack of efforts in finding ‘champions’ for continuing initiatives. In some cases, lack of sustainability was built into project design, such as through a lack of exit strategies. Many pilot projects did not lead to replication or upscaling, and, therefore, had little impact.

Partnerships were not fully utilized, and there was untapped potential in developing broader collaboration. UNDP relied mostly on the Government as a partner and so missed some opportunities to cooperate with civil society, academics, development research centres and others. It did not work sufficiently with state and local governments in a systematic and sustained way. Partnerships with other UN agencies could have been more effective with a clearer division of labour.

There was much more potential for systematically promoting South-South cooperation. While UNDP engaged in a number of activities to promote this, these tended to be isolated events rather than a concerted effort. South-South cooperation has great potential to bring lessons from successful experiences elsewhere to India, and disseminate the Indian experiences to other developing countries. UNDP has a potential role as an important knowledge broker helping the Government in its ambitions to provide useful lessons to other countries in the region and beyond.

With development partners at all levels finding it hard to identify a clear mandate for UNDP, it was reassuring to note that the organization has moved to reduce the number of its projects and focus them more strategically. UNDP has made several important contributions to India’s development in the past decade, but it must now reposition itself, and change methods of work substantially in order to meet the changing context within the country and globally.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Shift the main focus of UNDP activities away from small projects upstream to become more of a development think-tank, a locus for learning and unlearning about development issues, and engaging in policy advocacy.
- Look for overarching focal issues around which to organize work and shed extraneous or small activities that are not part of the central focus. Human development should once again become the organizing principle for UNDP work in India.
- Strengthen the capacity of the country office, while setting up strong and viable offices in each of the UN Development Assistance Framework states. Shift all field project activity to the relevant states.
- Improve and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems.

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UNDP IN INDONESIA

Indonesia has undergone dramatic changes in its system for governance, including a massive and rapid decentralization of authority for public service delivery. It has faced a daunting series of natural disasters, and environmental challenges are increasing, with consequences such as severe flooding in urban areas. The national medium-term development plan emphasizes a strong macroeconomic framework for economic growth.

UNDP contributed to human development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), democratic governance, sustainable development and effective use of energy, reduced vulnerability to crisis, and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh and North Sumatra. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2010.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2008: $378.8 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008

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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2008 ($ MILLIONS)

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FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has effectively responded to two of Indonesia’s most urgent challenges—its democratization process, and disaster reconstruction and prevention—with great skill, imagination and flexibility, forging strategic partnerships at many different levels and contributing meaningfully to government efforts.

The transformation to democratic forms of governance required support in organizing free and fair elections, building accountable institutions, and providing space for developing policies and partnerships. In responding to the emergency after the tsunami in Aceh, UNDP supported the gradual transition to reconstruction, and to building peace and democratic institutions.

The organization’s most important contribution to poverty reduction was using civil society organizations to manage grants and credits to households, and committing local communities to a rights-based approach to public services and access to justice. This extended support for livelihoods in 200,000 households.

With the Government firmly committed to the MDGs, UNDP also assisted efforts to strengthen a pro-poor approach for achieving MDG targets. This approach was based on systematic monitoring and targeting, and entailed engaging local communities in a dialogue about the targets and their fulfilment.

Considering the enormous challenges Indonesia faces from climate change, threats to biodiversity and natural resources, the environment programme has been relatively modest in size. UNDP mainly managed projects under the Global Environment Facility, such as the Small Grants Programme, various renewable energy initiatives, natural resource management, and direct support to the government on policymaking and the Montreal Protocol. Imports of ozone-destroying substances were banned in 2008, and the Ozone Layer Protection Programme is being applied in all provinces.

UNDP supported mainstreaming gender issues in all policies and development programmes. Many projects across its programme areas included components or requirements for supporting gender equality, although the degree of mainstreaming varied.

Positive contributions to capacity development during decentralization built on a comprehensive approach based on systematic needs assessment, and analysis of the roles of institutions and incentive structures. UNDP went beyond time-bound individual training activities, seeking to make results more nationally owned and sustained. Some challenges included a relatively high rotational rate in many local governments, making it difficult to retain new capacities and knowledge.
The efficiency of UNDP programming was mixed. External observers expressed concerns with aspects such as timeliness and cost effectiveness. Overambitious plans and unreliable sources of funding contributed to delays, loss of efficiency, and in some cases, termination of pilot projects at a time when they began to produce results.

Given the geographical coverage of the programme, UNDP’s own administration was quite centralized, leaving the programme offices in Aceh and Papua limited authority regarding resource allocation, recruitment and procurement. In building a constructive relationship with local government bodies and civil society in the provinces, this limitation placed UNDP at a clear disadvantage.

A robust planning, monitoring and evaluation unit was commendable, and was accompanied by training staff and partners, and institutionalizing regular highly participatory review exercises. The focus of monitoring and reporting needed to shift from the output to outcome level, however, and the choice, use and coordination of evaluation activities needed to be more strategic.

Partnerships with the Government at the national and local level mainly centred on the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), which approves and most often implements UNDP programmes. This relationship has become a strategic asset, based on shared values as well as mutual familiarity.

Through the Jakarta Commitment of 2009, the Government and its international development partners agreed to implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This means managing the UNDP programme differently, particularly with regard to procurement support for national execution/national implementation modality projects. In many if not most cases, the Government has handed the procurement function back to UNDP, but over the long term, capacity should be built in the Indonesian administration both for conducting the procurement process and protecting its integrity.

In general, operationalizing the principles of the Jakarta Commitment in UNDP programming to ensure national ownership, alignment, and application of national systems and practices will require concerted efforts and a clear multiyear strategy. Priorities for the next country programme need to be clearly defined, particularly with Indonesia attaining middle-income country status, and both core and non-core funding rapidly declining.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should support Indonesia’s transition to middle-income country status by relying more on its relative advantages in networking and innovative approaches to development than on managing projects requiring big inputs of staff and equipment. UNDP should set priorities for its resource mobilization for the next three to five years and discuss them with potential sources of funding with a view to drawing up a medium-term plan for raising and deploying financial resources.
- To strengthen its strategic focus and use of reducing resources, UNDP’s geographical focus should be continued.
- UNDP should review its partnership strategy to engage more actively with the private sector and local government, and to strengthen the advocacy role of its civil society partners.
- UNDP should actively engage major Indonesian stakeholders—including government agencies, and civil society and private-sector actors—in a national discussion of policies and measures against climate change.
- UNDP should improve sustainability of results by working with BAPPENAS, implementing partners and beneficiaries to develop realistic exit strategies at the time of planning. With a wider application of a programme approach to planning UNDP interventions, the changing roles among the partners during the life of an intervention will be better managed through integration in the host administration from the very outset.
- UNDP should continue to strengthen the results orientation of its programme by further improving the outcome orientation of monitoring and reporting, and making the evaluation plan more strategic based on management and strategic information needs.
- UNDP should also review the rules and routines for project management in order to enhance management efficiency of its programme.
- To speed up implementation of the Jakarta Commitment principles, procurement training and certification should be initiated quickly and without prejudice to the common road map laid down by the Government in the Aid for Development Effectiveness Project.

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Lao People’s Democratic Republic has unique ethnic and environmental diversity. In recent years, it has achieved impressive economic growth and significant advances in human development but remains one of the least developed countries. Challenges persist related to inequalities among regions, high dependence on rich natural resources, and a legacy of unexploded ordnance that imposes human security and development constraints. Political decision-making remains highly centralized and broader participation is limited.

UNDP programmes have covered issues in poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and environment, crisis prevention and recovery, and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2006.

UNDP supported Lao People’s Democratic Republic in moving towards its overarching national goal of leaving the ranks of the least developed countries by 2020 and halving extreme poverty by 2015. Much of its work focused on strengthening national capacities, fostering an enabling policy environment, seeking innovative local solutions and promoting gender equality.

Improved aid effectiveness through better donor coordination had a significant impact, given the country’s reliance on aid, and has been one of UNDP’s major achievements. The country is one of only three in Asia where the Round Table Meeting is the principal mechanism for aid coordination, rather than the Consultative Group Meetings organized by the World Bank. On the donor side, there were more effective structures for dialogue and communication, including eight thematic groups that facilitate concrete planning. This improved coordination with the Government, which recently formed its own thematic working groups to work with the donor ones. One significant result was the increasing alignment of donor activities with national priorities. All major donors were participating in the Round Table Meeting, although some new donors in the region had not yet been incorporated.

National capacity for policy research and dialogue, particularly in relation to growth and poverty reduction, was enhanced through UNDP technical support on major planning and policy issues, and consistent advocacy for the inclusion of pro-poor aspects. Three National Human Development Reports shaped planning on top national priorities, including regional integration.

The Gender Resource and Information Development project with the Lao Women’s Union achieved notable results integrating gender into national policy and data gathering. UNDP contributed to stronger capacities related to gender analysis and training, and gender mainstreaming in government ministries. A recent analysis of institutional capacity provided recommendations to significantly enhance the organization’s capacity for gender mainstreaming across its own activities.

Governance reforms are the cornerstone of UNDP’s programme, but progress was mixed. UNDP contributed to greater capacity in the National Assembly, for example, especially with regard to its procedures. Support to public administration and governance reform initiatives, however, while robust, were hampered by weak commitment at higher levels of the Government.

Among pilot projects implemented in poor districts of four provinces, the most notable accomplishment was Luang Prabang’s adoption of the National Accounting
System to ensure proper financial transactions. This had a high probability of being replicable. Through training, important models for community participation in village development plans emerged, yet it was unclear that such exercises would empower everyone, including women. The programmes were still too new to provide evidence of improved service delivery to the poor.

UNDP supported the Government in fulfilling its obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, such as through support to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The regional Mekong wetlands programme helped link wetlands conservation and sustainable use to rural livelihoods and sustainable development models. Despite the centrality of natural resources to the economy and sustainable development, however, UNDP has shied away from coordinating policy dialogue in this area, missing opportunities to incorporate environment and natural resources management more explicitly into governance.

Through its ability to convene both donors and key national officials, UNDP helped resolve a funding crisis and put the national programme for the disposal of unexploded ordnance on a solid institutional and financial basis. A long-term strategic plan resulted in more efficient planning and a stronger case for continued international support. Other assistance helped develop a new multisectoral strategy to meet governance challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, and re-establish the important relationship between the Government and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Capacity development and national ownership were consistent strategies in all UNDP programmes, woven into goals such as policy development. UNDP, for example, helped develop the government office to liaise with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and orchestrate visits or other forms of exchanges with ASEAN neighbours that have been instrumental in influencing reforms and innovative programmes.

Overall, UNDP’s approach built a level of trust with the Government, giving it a strategic niche in supporting governance reforms and helping develop national capacities. Yet all programming in Lao People’s Democratic Republic is strongly influenced by the continued need for aid. And further progress will depend in part on deeper governance reforms, including towards ushering in a more stable, professional, civil service system.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should continue its role in aid coordination and the Round Table Meeting process.
- UNDP should maintain its current programme profile but pay greater attention to moving beyond policies and frameworks towards implementation. Results, such as greater service delivery to the poor are necessary to demonstrate that reforms do not remain only on paper and contribute effectively to the Government’s capacity, in collaboration with other actors, to reduce poverty.
- UNDP should play a stronger role in incorporating natural resource management into its programme through the governance window.
- UNDP should fully implement the recommendations made in the Gender Assessment Report and Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.
- UNDP should promote South–South cooperation through ensuring the participation of neighbouring countries in donor coordination processes.
- UNDP should continue to develop national capacities to enhance development effectiveness, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the UN reform process. To be effective, this will need to proceed hand in hand with governance reforms.
- UNDP should revise its use of external advisers to ensure that qualifications and modalities best contribute to capacity development. This includes flexible designs for expert input, greater reliance on regional experts and the development of local expertise.
- UNDP should assess various models and experiences in participatory planning, since the experiments in participatory planning taking place throughout the country could provide useful input into governance reform.
- UNDP should implement the proposed study on the use of lands cleared of unexploded ordnance and ensure that the terms of reference are broad enough to assess the development impact. The study could assess the planning capacity of local government and confirm that clearance will promote pro-poor development.

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Lao People's Democratic Republic has been striving for progress against arduous conditions. It has an ethnically diverse population in a mountainous terrain, the majority relying on subsistence agriculture. The experience and institutional infrastructure necessary for dealing with the challenges of market-led development have been lacking, although in recent years, the Government has engaged in administrative and legal reforms. Development policies have been guided by a succession of five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plans.

UNDP has focused on poverty and democratic governance, with work on social sectors conducted primarily by other UN agencies, although the organization assisted on HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2011.

UNDP aligned its activities very closely with national ambitions for long-term development. The highest priority is to graduate from least developed country status by 2020. To this end, the Government has devised strategies to ensure rapid and pro-poor growth, to develop a legal and governance structure commensurate with a modern globalized economy, and to pursue economic growth in an environmentally sustainable manner. In all these areas, UNDP played major roles.

As a trusted and valuable development partner, UNDP had a leading part in aid coordination process. This provided great leverage but also compelled the organization to at times stretch its resources beyond its capacity and competence. In aid coordination, the organization performed assiduously and effectively, making an impact on the formulation and evolution of successive national plans. Meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets by 2015 was the primary focus of the seventh national development plan, where UNDP policy advocacy had a major impact. Assistance in costing the MDGs provided the foundation for formulating sectoral policies in the plan.

While the country has made much progress in recent years towards ratifying core international human rights treaties and multilateral environment treaties, in large part due to UNDP support, much remains to be done to ensure full respect for human rights within the country.

This entails overcoming capacity constraints in implementing policies, and providing effective access to justice to all people, particularly in remote areas.

Notable progress on gender equality included increasing the representation of women in the legislature and executive branch. UNDP's gender mainstreaming efforts had mixed results at best, however. A notable exception was a small but pioneering local radio programme that achieved remarkable success in raising awareness about gender-related issues within the target community.

Largely due to UNDP's efforts, national strategies became increasingly pro-poor. 'Growth with equity' was placed firmly on the agenda. Pro-poor policies included targeting development programmes to the poorest districts, and vocational training programmes run by some ministries. Overall resources devoted to these initiatives were too modest to make a significant impact, however. Despite the high rate of economic growth in the last two decades, poverty has declined far too slowly.

Even within UNDP's programmes, activities were often not specifically pro-poor. For example, trade-related projects may have contributed to trade expansion in general, but did not promote policies to direct the gains from trade to the poor or stimulate pro-poor economic sectors.

Support to governance reforms at the subnational level achieved some good results. Experimentation with
alternative financing mechanisms highlighted the potential of the District Development Fund (DDF), which gives discretionary power to local authorities and involves communities in decision-making. Follow-up actions are needed to assure effective development outcomes and sustain results.

A range of activities sought to strengthen people’s voice and participation in decision-making. National Assembly members are better able to absorb and reflect the grievances of the public, thanks to a live hotline during parliamentary sessions and a streamlined system for complaints management. A new legal framework allows civil society organizations to emerge and function more effectively.

Until recently, UNDP’s environment programme was focused on strengthening national capacity to better understand and implement global environmental concerns and conventions, especially those related to climate change. These efforts have increased capacities to develop necessary policy frameworks and programmes, but scaling up implementation is imperative. Greater attention needs to be paid to links between economic activities and environmental resources.

UNDP could improve efficiency through synergies across its own portfolio and with other development partners. One obvious example was the range of activities involving local communities in participatory planning for local development. Further, there was a persistent mismatch between the scope of programmes and resources. When collaborating with other development partners, the organization should avoid multiple procedures.

As a whole, UNDP support was so well aligned with national priorities that there was little question about ownership. But national capacity to sustain results was still very weak without support from donors. With a few exceptions, as in the case of support to the planning process, projects have yet to create national capacity for independent functioning. Where capacity has been created, as with the Community Radio Project and the DDF, sustainability required supplementing capacity with additional resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As the Government’s lead development partner in aid coordination, UNDP should continue to take initiatives to ensure the system functions effectively. UNDP could also support the capacity development of the Government and the National Assembly on monitoring and evaluation of policy impact and development assistance.
- UNDP should help the Government build consensus among development partners on priority actions for achieving national strategy goals, and should involve partners from the conceptualization of its own projects and activities, rather than trying to mobilize funds for existing proposals.
- UNDP should focus on projects and activities more closely linked to its human development mandate and comparative strengths, reorienting existing activities where necessary.
- UNDP could pursue gender equality more vigorously, based on a coherent strategy, in collaboration with other development partners. It should also strive for better mainstreaming of gender in its own programmes as well as in various government departments and agencies.
- Based on the national strategy that features growth with equity, UNDP should make greater efforts to support the Government in mobilizing resources towards implementing policies and programmes that would stimulate pro-poor economic sectors, direct gains from economic growth to the poor and remove key constraints they face.
- The DDF mechanism for strengthening the capacity of subnational administrations should be scaled up, replicated throughout the country and supported with greater resources for its sustainability. UNDP should also attempt to spread the use of such mechanisms as the Citizen Report Card and One Door Service.
- Stronger efforts should be made to involve an emerging civil society in the development process.
- The environment programme should continue its reorientation towards policy implementation and local-level interventions that aim to achieve both sustainable environment and sustainable livelihoods.
- The model of the Community Radio Project should be scaled up and replicated across the country.
- For greater effectiveness and efficiency, UNDP should exploit potential synergies among its various activities.

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Malaysia is an upper middle-income country aiming to attain high-income country status. Long interested in sharing its development experience with other developing countries, it has contributed extensively to capacity development in African and Asian countries.

As a long-standing development partner in Malaysia, UNDP provides support for inclusive growth; environment, energy and climate change; and the global partnership for development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2008 to 2015.

UNDP has positioned itself well in Malaysia, shifting from responding to national strategies to helping to articulate them, as demonstrated by close involvement with the preparation of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. It has carved out a niche as a source of intellectual capital, brought sensitive issues to the table and stimulated debate on policy change. UNDP is seen as source of ideas, rather than as a source of funding, as is appropriate in this upper middle-income context.

Interventions addressing inclusive growth have targeted both specific issues in Malaysia’s unfinished development agenda and emerging human development challenges. UNDP’s expertise in inclusive growth (such as dimensions of inequality, social mobility and inclusion, the urban poor) and human development coincided strongly with the Tenth Malaysia Plan’s emphasis on reducing relative poverty and inequality, and with the focus on the ‘People Economy’ proposed in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan.

Among other achievements, the organization helped develop a multidimensional poverty index, and deploy GIS mapping and other technical tools to make a case for equity in the ‘ICare for 1Malaysia’ plan for transforming the national health care system. Several notable contributions came in highlighting inequalities, such as pockets of poverty in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, among the indigenous Orang Asli and for people with disabilities.

Despite UNDP’s stated intentions to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment, gender has not been integrated as a development concern across the programme. Only a few specific, modest contributions were made. There seemed to be limited understanding of the notion that gender programming requires a thorough analysis of effects on both men and women in terms of potential benefits and drawbacks. A corporate tool to track gender equality and women’s empowerment showed that only 4 of 61 projects had gender equality as a main objective. These were all in the inclusive growth portfolio. Around a third, all in the environment portfolio, were not expected to contribute to gender equality at all.

UNDP has made significant contributions to results in the environment, energy and climate change sectors. It helped Malaysia to both better meet socioeconomic development and ecological demands on resources, and fulfil international commitments. Risks were managed to reduce impacts on people and the environment. Energy security has improved. Elements of equity and inclusivity were built into interventions, particularly in biodiversity initiatives. There was a new emphasis on sustainable use, equity and sharing of benefits, and resource valuation based on the use and conservation potential of natural resources, such as through payment for ecosystems services.

Greater attention could have been given to demonstrating links between achievements in the environment and human development and inclusive growth targets, both in the articulation of project frameworks and the communication of results. While a shift in this direction has started, UNDP’s niche was still not clear to many
stakeholders. It was perceived less as a thought leader and more as a source of support for facilitating access to Global Environment Facility projects. UNDP could have done more to profile itself as a source of innovation and expertise.

South-South cooperation is a highly relevant area of engagement, given Malaysia’s interest and potential for increasing its engagement. UNDP adopted a dual strategy of supporting strategic thinking on new directions in South-South cooperation, and assisting institutions to provide in-depth training on specific topics of interest to national and international participants. Despite effective support to individual institutions, which have offered training opportunities to participants from Southern countries, progress towards the intended programme outcomes—increased engagement in the global partnership for development—was limited.

An emphasis on facilitating high-quality empirical research and providing evidence-based policy advice has been very relevant to Malaysia, which has relatively high levels of technical capabilities, but still confronts some gaps in skills. In the development of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, for instance, UNDP was involved in 11 of 42 initial strategy papers, but also supported a technical writing workshop for 47 Economic Planning Unit staff. It helped them identify strengths and weaknesses of the Tenth Malaysia Plan Report, and build on lessons learned in terms of ease of readability and coherence. In a project on conserving marine biodiversity, UNDP helped the Department of Marine Parks enhance its capacity to better manage marine parks together with communities, and employ structured management techniques grounded in solid baseline data.

UNDP has progressively sharpened its focus, strengthened its programme management, and addressed implementation challenges. It worked with the Government to review, clarify and document the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the project cycle, for example. But reporting has not consistently focused on results and contributions to outcomes. It tended to foreground the number of projects implemented and the types of project outputs produced, rather than assessing contributions or progress towards intended outcomes.

In sum, UNDP has been a dependable, trusted and responsive development partner, supporting Malaysia in selected sectors. Among its comparative advantages are its neutrality, and its ability to combine international perspectives with local knowledge. By combining deep global knowledge of specific inclusive growth issues with sound local knowledge, it has been able to identify key development gaps, formulate relevant projects, and propose policy options for addressing relative poverty.

**Recommendations**

- As Malaysia prepares to launch its final five-year plan designed to achieve Vision 2020 and high-income status, UNDP should continue to identify gaps and challenges faced by the poorest and most excluded groups to assist Malaysia in reducing inequalities. At the same time, UNDP should help Malaysia look beyond 2020 to continue and/or begin addressing other challenges to sustainable human development that are likely to remain even as economic targets are met.
- In determining specific areas of intervention for the next country programme, UNDP and the Government should identify where UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017, UNDP Malaysia’s comparative expertise, the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the Government of Malaysia’s priorities intersect, to ensure that the country programme is focused and designed to ultimately address the opportunities and capabilities of the poorest and most excluded, as well as promote sustainability.
- UNDP should more systematically use gender analysis and disaggregated data in programme planning and implementation, and should develop a gender strategy to inform its own programme design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation.
- Given that spatial inequalities remain, UNDP may consider, in consultation with the Government, a stronger state-level engagement in the next country programme, focusing on the states with the highest rates of multidimensional poverty and/or the greatest inequalities.
- UNDP should continue to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as its reporting and communication on results and contributions to outcome-level change.

**About the ICPEs**

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A small island developing state, the Maldives is exposed to external shocks such as the December 2004 tsunami. Rising sea levels may cause many islands to disappear, while other islands may become too densely populated to sustain their population. Moreover, the Maldives faces serious economic challenges arising from the narrow economic base comprised almost exclusively of tourism and fisheries. Dealing with recent graduation from least developed country status and further sustaining democratization and respect are other major challenges.

UNDP activities include programmes on poverty reduction, democratic governance, the environment and disaster management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2010.

UNDP’s presence and contribution is of paramount importance to the Government of the Maldives, especially as most donors do not prioritize the country. This also means, however, that the organization stretches too few human and financial resources over a very wide range of interventions. Although these were relevant, they were sometimes not sufficiently fitted to institutional priorities and may have overstretched government capacity. The most valued UNDP attributes included its long-standing presence, flexibility and responsiveness, including to unplanned emergencies or changing development plans, and its ability to provide international expertise. UNDP’s support to new democratic institutions was widely recognized, although democratic gains are still fragile, and the capacity of key institutions such as Parliament and the judiciary remains worryingly weak. Results from support to livelihoods and post-tsunami reconstruction at the atoll and island level were mixed. Some individuals and communities benefited; others were not able to use or to sustain the benefits extended to them. There were complaints of irregularity, lack of transparency and wastage. Insufficient capacity has been developed to enable islanders to tap into regional or national systems—markets, transport, knowledge and investment opportunities, among others.

Gender equality and youth remained major areas for support. In spite of progress towards gender parity at primary and secondary levels of education, gender equality and the rights of women were a particular concern at a time when conservative trends threaten progress. Capacity for gender analysis and programming was limited within the country and appeared insufficiently developed within UNDP, however. UNDP and the UN system played an important role in drawing national attention to youth issues through their support for the Youth Voices report and its laudable participatory process. But follow-up was inadequate, boding ill for the country’s future political and socioeconomic development given a number of challenges faced by young people today.

Although HIV/AIDS was recognized as a threat of potentially disastrous proportions at the central level, there was little awareness of the problem at the local level. The effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS programme was limited due partly to the focus of the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on numerical targets rather than qualitative results, and partly due to lack of clarity regarding roles and ownership. Efforts may not be sustainable because limited capacity has been built.

UNDP has been effective in advocacy, including through its support to the Millennium Development
Goals and Youth Voices reports. Reports of the independent UN-appointed Special Rapporteurs have not been utilized fully as advocacy tools, however. Some positive results in capacity development at the policy level took place in the area of energy, effective waste management and climate change. But opportunities to develop national capacities are sometimes missed through reliance on international rather than national consultants, and the failure to pair nationals with internationals to enable learning.

The view of UNDP effectiveness at the island/atoll level is very different from that at the central level. In disaster management support, the central level believed that UNDP had responded well in efforts to strengthen national capacity, including by integrating disaster risk reduction in the national building code and school curriculum. At the island/atoll level, however, there appeared to be little awareness of how to deal with disaster.

UNDP programme design and implementation need to be more robust. The practice of embarking on projects with budgets that are partly unfunded, on the basis that the remainder would be raised while implementation proceeds, was a risky one. In general, risk factors were identified at the project formulation stage, but it was not clear that mitigation strategies would effectively deal with the risks or that key barriers were identified and addressed. Few projects had developed exit strategies; among those that had strategies, there were question marks as to whether they will work.

One important measure to facilitate project implementation was to enable partners to address lack of clarity and tensions through joint task forces and other mechanisms. For the important Atoll Ecosystem-based Conservation Project, mid-term evaluation findings were used to support a participatory revision by project management and stakeholders, leading to valuable intermediate results.

In sum, the experience of the Maldives has many ingredients that may be relevant for other country offices. These include the need to achieve more with fewer interventions and to take a more strategic approach, while addressing the barriers of weak policy and capacity.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should continue to provide support to the small UN country team to strive towards a higher level of joint planning, implementation and monitoring.
- UNDP must adopt a more strategic approach in its country programme—an approach that has a sharp focus on a narrower range of themes while addressing the main barriers of weak policy and weak capacity.
- The programme focus should continue to be upstream, at the central and (eventually) provincial level.
- UNDP should reduce poverty alleviation work at the community level and concentrate on the policy level.
- The country programme should continue to focus on governance/human rights as a flagship theme at the central level, with particular emphasis on the judiciary and parliamentary development; and it should move into provincial government support as and when the decentralization policy starts showing results.
- UNDP should refocus environment work on climate and biodiversity while broadening the resource base beyond the Global Environment Facility and exploring the possibility of support from the private sector.
- Pass on the coordination and initiative on disaster and risk management activities to the National Disaster Management Centre, ensuring that it is strengthened as part of programme implementation.
- Develop government capacity to manage the HIV/AIDS programme with a view to handing over the programme to the Government and giving the lead within the UN country team to UNFPA and WHO.
- UNDP should adopt and support a strategic approach to gender equality.
- While not necessarily taking a programme lead on youth, UNDP should facilitate UN country team action to support a sustained and strategic national intervention to tackle this pressing concern.
- Except for one-off responses to emerging needs, UNDP must ensure that a project fits within the strategic framework of the Country Programme Document outcomes, which in turn should fit with the UN Development Assistance Framework.
- All interventions must aim to increase local capacity and enhance empowerment.
- Engage in effective performance monitoring for adaptive management and make exit strategies and sustainability plans an essential element of all projects.

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The transition of Mongolia from a Soviet-style socialist system to a democratic system with a market-oriented economy was relatively peaceful but resulted in an upheaval of structures that had been in place for 70 years. Generally sound legal and institutional frameworks have been put in place, but challenges remain in implementation and capacity. A high level of poverty has persisted despite periods of rapid economic growth. Recurrent winter disasters and environmental degradation have emerged as critical challenges.

UNDP support has comprised the issues of democratic governance and human rights, human development and poverty reduction, and sustainable natural resources management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

The strength of UNDP’s relationship with the Government of Mongolia had notable results, leading to the incorporation of core UNDP concerns into the country’s broad policy framework. The organization successfully promoted human development; policy discussions and documents now regularly refer to the concept. A Human Development Fund was created to manage the resources expected from greatly expanded mining operations.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute the framework for the National Development Strategy 2008-2021. With support from UNDP, the Government has been working to extend MDG monitoring to the most decentralized administrative units. The State Great Khural has adopted the MDGs as the law of the land, including a ninth goal on democratic governance. The creation of the National Development and Innovation Committee (NDIC) in 2009 resulted from a long process of developing an institution with responsibility for coordinating and supervising the strategy to achieve the goals and middle-income status.

UNDP contributed as well to improved access to justice by supporting the establishment of Legal Aid Centres and awareness-raising on domestic violence; improved livelihood opportunities for the poor through its enterprise development programme; and improved disaster management by supporting the modernization of the disaster management agency.

The strong partnership with the Government at the strategic level did not always translate into concordance between UNDP and the Government in individual initiatives, however. Mismatches were observed between the intent of UNDP’s initiatives and government follow-up actions. This has limited effectiveness and sustainability.

For example, UNDP steadily supported development of government capacities to collect and produce data to analyse poverty with a view towards informing poverty-focused policies. But policymakers have yet to make regular, effective use of this capacity in formulating policies or drafting annual budgets. There were long delays in passing laws related to grassland management drafted with contributions from UNDP and other development partners. A notable exception to this tendency was the initiative to provide legal assistance to criminal defendants. After UNDP helped set up the system, the Government assumed full responsibility and now bears the core costs of operations.

UNDP’s approach often appeared less strategic than tactical. Each project or activity seemed focused on achieving its narrow objective, and efforts were not coordinated among in-house teams or with development partners. One example concerned poverty and growing vulnerability in rural areas, seen partly as resulting from environmental degradation from poor grazing practices. The problem seemed to be exacerbated by weakness of the regulatory framework and lack of enforcement. It
would seem natural that the strategy to address such an issue would require multidimensional interventions involving all teams, but this was not the case.

There were too few examples of public involvement in policy formulation and programme implementation. Voluntarily created civil society groups are a relatively recent phenomenon; many are still weak and seeking their voice. UNDP often refers to the need for greater engagement with civil society groups. Representatives of a number of civil society organizations expressed the view, however, that UNDP had until recently interacted mostly with representatives of public institutions. As UNDP engages with the Government on diverse policy issues, including civil society in its activities would help strengthen their capacities and the country’s democratic system.

UNDP’s support did not lead to effective and transparent aid coordination at policy and programme levels. Progress was slow in establishing an effective and transparent coordination mechanism to align and integrate policy and programme support with national efforts. This resulted in incoherent policy support or uncoordinated parallel programmes by different development partners. With the establishment of the NDIC, the Government made strides towards establishing such a mechanism centred on the Comprehensive National Development Strategy. UNDP could play a supportive role in this effort.

Projects mostly operated under a national execution modality (NEX) with a project management unit/project implementation unit (PMU/PIU) often staffed by outside experts working in parallel with a national partner. This practice weakened national ownership and contributions to capacity development, and diluted accountability and alignment with priority needs.

Questions remained over whether UNDP was sufficiently responsive to latent or developing issues in a way that advanced human development. Further, in a time of increasingly constrained resources, but also a persistent tendency towards the parallel implementation of similar activities, the path towards a more strategic programme approach likely passes through much closer collaboration and cooperation with other stakeholders. This would allow sets of activities to be designed and coordinated, give true meaning to partnerships, and provide a concrete platform to promote greater aid coordination around common objectives.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should continue and enhance the support extended over the past decade to develop capacities to define and implement evidence-based policies focused on human development. It could further support capacity development of the NDIC, inter alia, through assistance in refining indicators.
- UNDP should better link its assistance to the government’s priority actions and be more selective to this end. The development of capacities should not be an end in itself; it should be a means to realize an expected outcome. UNDP should continue to make strategic interventions where they have been making a real difference, such as in capacity development support for disaster management. At the same time, it should be more selective in initiating support and avoiding activities with little chance of follow-up actions.
- UNDP should make a serious effort to introduce a more strategic and programmatic approach, focusing on development objectives and achievement of results. To this end, it should foster more collaboration among its cluster teams and promote much closer collaboration with other development partners where appropriate.
- UNDP should take a more inclusive approach to democratic governance by involving civil society more directly and substantively into its activities. It could also support government efforts to improve the participation of civil society in governance. This should be achieved through mobilizing existing and developing civil initiatives in a variety of areas, from associations for environmental protection to NGOs providing social services.
- UNDP should strategically position itself as the facilitator of national efforts and government programmes, rather than being a project implementer. In doing so, it should utilize its comparative strength, such as its convening power, global network and value-based approach. Pilot initiatives should be designed within national programmes so that results can be replicated by the Government.
- UNDP should review its approach to the use of the NEX modality and initiate a strategy for transition to a full NEX modality. It should confine itself to playing a supporting role, providing specific technical assistance and financial support for implementation.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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In 2006 Nepal emerged from a decade of civil conflict with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord. While classified as a least developed country, it has improved its human development indicators, and the economy has grown steadily. Inequality between ethnic and caste groups continues to increase, however, and gender inequality remains a major challenge. The country is highly vulnerable to natural hazards.

UNDP programmes provided support in the arenas of peacebuilding, recovery and reintegration; transitional governance; inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods; and energy and environment, and disaster management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2011.

UNDP has been unstinting in its support to the people and Government of Nepal, making a strong contribution to development results across a diverse portfolio. Some programmes were adopted as policy or models by the Government, and attracted support from other development partners. The organization sought to address the urgent needs of communities during the conflict as well as longer term issues, such as through capacity development in institutions essential for consolidating peace, and promoting democracy and development.

Although the area of peacebuilding and recovery has been particularly challenging given political sensitivity, UNDP has contributed substantively to the capacity development of important institutions, namely, the Constituent Assembly, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, and the Election Commission of Nepal. The organization’s role in the discharge of former combatants is widely acknowledged. Democratic dialogues where UNDP partnered with civil society raised awareness among communities about the constitution development process, yet effectiveness was constrained by the incomplete peace process and incomplete Constitution.

In transitional governance, at the height of the conflict, UNDP supported local communities to initiate and implement their own development activities. The innovative Public-Private Partnership Programme for Urban Environment has fostered development of a national policy on public-private partnerships; several of these have delivered basic services to people in urban centres. Support to the National Planning Commission contributed to mainstreaming the MDGs in national planning, though challenges in localizing the goals remained.

UNDP contributed to law reform and modernization of the justice system. The use of alternative dispute resolution, in particular, mediation, has been adopted by the Supreme Court and court-annexed mediation has been institutionalized. Community-based mediation has provided many poor people, especially women, with access to justice that is timely and less costly than the formal justice system. Community mediation centres do experience challenges, however, such as inappropriate use of mediation for serious criminal offences.

In its inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods portfolio, UNDP helped improve the livelihoods of a large number of households. The Micro-Enterprise Development Programme devised and progressively refined an enterprise development approach that has now been adopted by the Government. UNDP has also aided greater access to finance for those people who cannot secure this from banks. For many enterprises, though, sustainability is not imminent as they do not have access to larger markets.
UNDP’s substantial contribution on the environment and energy included supporting national policies and legislation. Community-based initiatives provided valuable insights that fed into policy development, including Nepal’s Climate Change Policy. Work on disaster risk management was fragmented; given the importance of this issue, UNDP established a dedicated Disaster Risk Management Unit in 2011.

Gender equality and social inclusion concerns cut across all programme components. Yet there was a tendency to focus on women’s participation as programme beneficiaries, without sufficient attention to their participation in decision-making. While UNDP made a conscious effort to target socially excluded groups including the ultra-poor, Dalits, Janajatis and Muslims, some groups, such as people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS, were not well-represented.

The country office has worked on improving its efficiency, such as by establishing the Project Implementation Support Unit in 2010. A number of initiatives aimed to improve planning for procurement and communication between programme and operations teams, and the monitoring and evaluation function was enhanced. Synergies among programmes could be improved.

Sustainability of development results was fragile for reasons of limited resources, and constraints faced by the Government in assuming ownership or providing resources. Inherent sustainability challenges in community-based projects came from their focus on the poorest and most excluded people, who have limited physical and social assets, and little or no prior opportunity to participate in development activities. Programmes became captured by those who are slightly better off.

Political neutrality and credibility were comparative strengths for which UNDP was widely recognized during and after the conflict. The Government appreciated its flexibility and responsiveness, and its robust analysis of the country context and thorough risk analysis. UNDP made good use of its global networks and corporate expertise in selected areas, for example, on crisis prevention and recovery. South-South cooperation was evident in some programmes, but lacked an overarching strategy to articulate what it should achieve in Nepal.

While it brokered partnerships with a number of international donors, UNDP did not engage non-traditional donors and the private sector to any significant extent. It worked with many non-governmental organizations, but not to its full potential.

As the next phase of Nepal’s transition brings new and existing challenges forward, UNDP faces resource constraints and risks to programme effectiveness. It will be essential to prioritize based on comparative strengths, such as the targeting of poor and socially excluded people, in line with evolving national prerogatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• UNDP’s programme for the next cycle should be based on a sound prioritization of programmes in light of possible future budgetary reduction, but should be sufficiently flexible to respond to the emerging needs of Nepal as it enters the next phase of its transition. This should be underpinned by a rigorous process of contextual analysis, follow-up of recommendations that emerge from monitoring and evaluation, and enhanced efforts in documentation of lessons learned.

• UNDP should continue with initiatives taken to improve programme and management efficiencies of its work, including enhancing synergies across its programmes and coordination between operations and programmes.

• UNDP should revise its approach to inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods programmes with a view to enhancing the sustainability of development results. This should include gradually shifting emphasis to advocacy and policy advice, informed by the practical experiences of pilot initiatives. UNDP should support the Government to mobilize resources for scaling up promising pilot initiatives.

• UNDP should develop a strategy for sustained institutional capacity development and government ownership, taking into consideration the fluid and fast-changing context of Nepal.

• UNDP should adopt a more systematic approach to South-South cooperation to sustain the benefits that can be derived from such activities.

• UNDP should address the existing gaps in its partnerships. This should include broadening its partnership base to include the private sector and non-traditional donors and addressing concerns about its in-country resource mobilization strategy.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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The Pacific subregion is highly diverse, spanning some 6,000 miles of the Pacific Ocean. Populations tend to be young, and population density is often high, pressuring natural resources. Common development constraints, typical to small island nations, include vast distances, small and dispersed local markets, and high unit costs of social and economic infrastructure. Poverty has become a significant issue in recent years.

UNDP has two multi-country offices covering 14 Pacific Island countries, with additional support from the UNDP Pacific Centre. Four programme areas are poverty reduction, governance and human rights, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2011.

UNDP in the Pacific made good inroads in mainstreaming the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in national processes and deepening understanding of poverty as a pressing development issue through policy and analytical research. Progress was also notable in some spheres of democratic governance, and crisis prevention and recovery in terms of responding to immediate disasters and strengthening disaster management. Innovative and downstream approaches showed good results in the area of energy and environment.

Gender equality initiatives saw mixed success. Capacity development contributions were fraught with endemic challenges of brain drain, rotation within public services and out-migration. Where expected results were not met or delayed, this was largely due to a combination of factors, including those outside UNDP’s control.

UNDP addressed a development agenda relevant to all Pacific Island countries through an overarching strategic programme focus as a basis for individual country projects and initiatives. It demonstrated consistent strategic alignment of activities, was imaginative and responsive, and operated with agility in a dynamic partnership environment. The standard approach that worked for most countries was limited in so-called micro-states, however, where development needs require attention at downstream and local levels. Service provision is more costly and effort-intensive because of thin government structures and lack of trained people.

Projects were generally well designed in a consultative way, but often suffered from delays caused on both the national and UNDP sides. Many projects operate outside the mainstream action or institutional structure of the government, which makes eventual integration difficult. Yet effectiveness in achieving results as well as sustainability were much greater where projects were driven by a government agency. The integration of MDG processes in national policy and planning, for example, enjoyed significant promise of longer sustainability.

Support to parliaments took a systemic view to enhance capacities in various ways, such as through training, handbooks, and establishment of committee structures, record management systems and procedures. This approach proved effective and sustainable. Other positive experiences emerged in projects with close engagement with civil society organizations in managing resources and processes, backed by commitments by local population groups to sustain project benefits.

Attention to project-level technical monitoring and enhancing access to UNDP’s technical knowledge remain urgent necessities. Better acceptance of policy-level work by governments would be facilitated by technical quality assurance by competent professionals.
Project outputs with policy implications also require substantive deliberation over time with different levels in government. Qualified, articulate professionals need to be available periodically at the project level.

Efficiency in programme management was mixed. Overambitious plans and unpredictable sources of funding at times caused initiatives to stall. The main issue of concern was managerial efficiency involving the timeliness of project approvals, timely procurement of inputs and recruitment of technical experts/consultants, and disbursement of funds. A number of issues arose from the challenges to multi-country offices of administering programmes across remote countries and locations.

Efficiency of project management at the site level, especially at subnational or outer island level, was weak. Late designation of counterparts, high turnover, lack of proper understanding of processes, and lack of substance on the project were some chronic problems. High operational costs limited UNDP monitoring. There were endemic rigidities in the national execution and national implementation processes that may have caused some delays. These should be assessed carefully, considering capacity constraints, efficiency and cost.

UNDP missed opportunities to leverage the joint strength of the multi-country offices and the Pacific Centre in a systematic and synchronized way to deliver the best knowledge, capacity and technical substance at the country level. The lack of an integrated management structure was the main reason for less than optimal performance in this area. In view of the increasing number of agencies with more technical clout crowding the area of the environment, UNDP needs to establish a specific niche for itself, beyond project management, on environmental governance.

UNDP maintained positive partnerships with governments, donors, regional organizations and civil society organizations. Its standing in the Pacific is disproportionately high in relation to the resources it directly contributes, primarily because it has forged strategic partnerships and dealt with partners in a way that generates trust and mutual respect.

Overall, the most distinctive characteristic of UNDP’s strategy may be its sustained focus on critically important issues with evolving depth and complexity, requiring advocacy and adequate evidence for generating policy support and strategic directions. Longer term support allows the space and time for countries to develop national positions, internalize these in institutional structures and develop adequate capacity to move forward.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The four outcome areas with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme continue to be most relevant for the Pacific Island countries. The next programme cycle should continue and consolidate in those areas.
- UNDP’s emphasis on work at the central and policy level should be balanced with opportunities for work at the downstream and outreach level with civil society organizations and communities.
- UNDP should accord priority and adequate technical support to project cycle management. Project formulation should be addressed in a technically competent fashion.
- Efficiency issues should be addressed on a number of fronts: Choice of implementation mode should be guided by the country situation rather than the corporate prescription of UNDP; more flexible human resources modalities or options for project-level recruitment should be introduced; and delays in fund transfers to projects should be addressed.
- Production of a periodic subregional Human Development Report should be considered to facilitate advocacy on sensitive issues and to provide added support for promotion of and compliance with UN values.
- Connect, integrate and infuse UNDP’s global knowledge and solutions in Pacific project level work.
- Introduce an institutional oversight system that would enable the multi-country offices and the Pacific Centre to consolidate the organization’s strength to deliver better quality development assistance. The performance of the current rules of engagement should be reviewed and applied with regular oversight by the senior management of the offices and the Pacific Centre. A dedicated participatory management deliberation between the offices, the Pacific Centre and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific is recommended to seriously explore potential options and follow up with bold decisions to implement all consequential changes.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Pakistan had its first peaceful democratic transfer of national administrations in 2013, attributed to more independent and strengthened election bodies. Following reform initiatives, economic growth rates have ticked up, but the country lags behind its neighbours in terms of competitiveness due to challenges including weak public institutions. Pakistan has suffered a series of large-scale natural disasters as well as protracted crises and conflicts.

UNDP has provided support related to development policy, crisis prevention and recovery, democratic governance, and the environment and climate change. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2013 to 2017, which included projects from previous programme cycles.

UNDP programmes aligned with Pakistan’s key national, regional and sectoral strategies, and relevant international commitments. By forging a close relationship with the Government, UNDP increasingly took development policy work as a major focus area, facilitating national discussions including on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Partnerships with various research and academic communities helped develop tools, such as the multidimensional poverty index, to capture a realistic poverty and human development picture. Support to the 2013 elections aided the peaceful transition of power. A comprehensive development strategy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa facilitated decentralization efforts, and strengthened parliamentary capacity and the rule of law.

Institutional capacities for disaster risk reduction and management improved at the national level and in select provinces, while community mobilization and infrastructure schemes assisted conflict-affected regions. UNDP helped the Government add environmental and climate change issues to the national agenda, make progress in environmental management, and bolster national capacity to address climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

UNDP has unique access to operate in the country’s most complex and sensitive regions. For many donors, this was one of the key reasons to work with the organization. UNDP successfully established crucial government cost-sharing agreements with national and provincial governments in several areas, such as for SDG units in all provinces, and the rule of law programme in KP.

On environment and climate change issues, UNDP primarily worked with the central line ministry, with limited provincial engagements or inclusion of other stakeholders. Support for devolution was highly selective, missing opportunities to influence national goals.

Engagement of women was generally weak, with some exceptions, such as successful capacity-building of the women’s parliamentary caucus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After a 2013 office realignment exercise abolished the gender unit—based on a decision to ‘rely on’ UN Women and other agencies to lead gender aspects in development—UNDP missed opportunity to encourage its staff to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment in its programming. There was no structured instrument for gender monitoring and addressing gender issues in projects, other than a general reference to ensuring gender-disaggregated data in programme/project documents.

The 2013 realignment aimed to improve programme efficiency and effectiveness. It closed over 100 small-scale projects and introduced policy-oriented work. Challenges remained in achieving envisaged goals, however.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2013–2015: $136.6 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2013-2015

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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2013-2015 ($ MILLIONS)

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<td>Environment and climate change</td>
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FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP programmes aligned with Pakistan’s key national, regional and sectoral strategies, and relevant international commitments. By forging a close relationship with the Government, UNDP increasingly took development policy work as a major focus area, facilitating national discussions including on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Partnerships with various research and academic communities helped develop tools, such as the multidimensional poverty index, to capture a realistic poverty and human development picture. Support to the 2013 elections aided the peaceful transition of power. A comprehensive development strategy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa facilitated decentralization efforts, and strengthened parliamentary capacity and the rule of law.

Institutional capacities for disaster risk reduction and management improved at the national level and in select provinces, while community mobilization and infrastructure schemes assisted conflict-affected regions. UNDP helped the Government add environmental and climate change issues to the national agenda, make progress in environmental management, and bolster national capacity to address climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

UNDP has unique access to operate in the country’s most complex and sensitive regions. For many donors, this was one of the key reasons to work with the organization. UNDP successfully established crucial government cost-sharing agreements with national and provincial governments in several areas, such as for SDG units in all provinces, and the rule of law programme in KP.

On environment and climate change issues, UNDP primarily worked with the central line ministry, with limited provincial engagements or inclusion of other stakeholders. Support for devolution was highly selective, missing opportunities to influence national goals.

Engagement of women was generally weak, with some exceptions, such as successful capacity-building of the women’s parliamentary caucus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After a 2013 office realignment exercise abolished the gender unit—based on a decision to ‘rely on’ UN Women and other agencies to lead gender aspects in development—UNDP missed opportunity to encourage its staff to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment in its programming. There was no structured instrument for gender monitoring and addressing gender issues in projects, other than a general reference to ensuring gender-disaggregated data in programme/project documents.

The 2013 realignment aimed to improve programme efficiency and effectiveness. It closed over 100 small-scale projects and introduced policy-oriented work. Challenges remained in achieving envisaged goals, however.
The reasons included limited internal capacity to design well-articulated, long-term programmes/projects. Programmes generally lacked a clear theory of change and a thorough needs assessment as well as critical political commitment in some cases. Interventions were typically characterized by small-scale, service-delivery efforts, with limited prospects for sustainability or scaling up. Many technical guidance and advisory services were outsourced, except in some areas, such as rule of law.

UNDP operated in some arenas where other UN and development partners have also been significantly engaged, such as youth employment, the election process, disaster risk management and area development in Balochistan. A ‘silo’ approach to the SDGs, including a decision to establish the SDG units without substantive engagements with other UN agencies, was a concern for many technical agencies that have already substantively engaged with their respective federal/provincial authorities on relevant SDG goals. Similarly, while UNDP was designated to lead the early recovery cluster within the UN system, collaboration with humanitarian actors was insufficient, lacking a ‘spirit of open dialogue’ and information sharing.

Overall, the results-based approach was weak, with a general absence of data and documentation. Few data were available demonstrating capacity changes among those who participated in training and workshops, for instance. A new monitoring policy was launched in 2014, along with a web-based monitoring system to track progress and results of all projects, measured against targets defined by the common country programme action plan. Given the spread and remoteness of many UNDP-supported projects, where monitoring has been highly dependent on national project managers (and community-based organizations in some cases), a robust mechanism for effective and efficient monitoring, measuring and reporting of results is critical.

Several challenges in the national implementation modality affected final results. They included the appointment of national project managers without a relevant technical background, resulting in coordination and mediation issues among stakeholders. Other issues included complex, multiple layers of actors along with the slow pace of decision-making. Some project steering committees were established at too high a level to function effectively in solving operational problems on the ground in a timely manner.

Despite some areas requiring improvement, UNDP’s long-term, strong relationship with the Government at different levels has given it some comparative strengths over other partners. These include its potential as a catalyst for further policy development and reforms, and lead role in some sectors, such as democratic governance, and the environment and climate change.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Leveraging its strong relationship with the national and provincial governments, UNDP should focus its programme efforts to accelerate a development-oriented agenda (support to state building) in the next cycle. Each thematic programme should be guided by a clear strategy, envisaged to achieve the objectives as defined in its country programme.
- UNDP should strengthen its upstream policy work to influence policy, institutional reforms, and creation of systems. UNDP’s internal sector-specific knowledge and expertise should be strengthened.
- UNDP should strengthen its coordination and partnership with other UN agencies in all its programme areas, including the areas requiring collective efforts within the UN in advancing national-level development goals (e.g., SDGs) as well as in early recovery efforts with other humanitarian actors.
- UNDP should more explicitly articulate gender equality and women’s empowerment in its programming strategy. These efforts should be led by senior management.
- In collaboration with the appropriate government partners, UNDP should revisit its overall NIM strategy to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP-supported NIM projects. Particular efforts should be made in strengthening of the project management structure, oversight mechanisms, and implementation strategies.
- UNDP should strengthen its result-based approach.
- UNDP should invest in fostering innovation and cross-fertilization of programme efforts.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Papua New Guinea has experienced periods of economic progress and poor performance. In the past decade, the Government has made efforts to address critical development challenges, but difficulties remain in implementing policies, laws and regulations. As an emerging democracy, the country has been politically volatile with unstable governments susceptible to frequent votes of no confidence. It faces a high level of risk from natural disasters.

UNDP has supported programmes on democratic governance, poverty reduction, gender, human rights, the environment and sustainable development, employment, HIV and AIDS, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aid coordination. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2011.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2010: $39.6 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010**

| Source Type                      | 2004-2010
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2010 ($ MILLIONS)**

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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Bougainville</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
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**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP contributed to national priorities and government needs in a complex political context, yet long-term development results were limited. Support to MDG planning helped the Department of National Planning and Monitoring and other national bodies to develop clearly defined targets and indicators, and integrate them in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). But data reliability did not improve significantly, with a missed opportunity for supporting the National Statistics Office to strengthen data collection. Poor dissemination of an MDG report was a matter of concern considering the need for increased awareness of goal-related progress.

Under the governance programme, financial management assistance at the provincial level was critical to strengthening the capacity of local institutions. Commendable efforts were made to support Parliament. Sustainability and scaling up would have been further enhanced with better government and other partnerships. Building on its impartiality and high levels of credibility, UNDP could do more to address key issues such as fair elections, transparency and human rights.

To advance gender equality, interventions focused on reserving legislative seats for women in Parliament. An inclusive, nationally driven process involved capacity-building for the Government, partners, potential women candidates and advocacy groups. Technical assistance helped in drafting legal documents and holding extensive consultations. This led to the women’s Equality and Participation bill now before Parliament.

Significant efforts went into supporting policy formulation and monitoring aimed at reducing HIV/AIDS. Helping to establish the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at the National AIDS Council Secretariat was one of UNDP’s most important contributions. More efforts will be required to bolster the Secretariat’s capacities. Other assistance backed the enactment of the 2003 HIV and AIDS Management and Prevention Act, which protects the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.

While the environment and energy portfolio responded to a number of needs, including in helping the Government to meet international commitments on biodiversity and climate change, it was not very effective. Work was influenced by funding sources rather than being grounded in a strategic approach. Considering...
the importance of a sustainable environment for Papua New Guinea, UNDP could have done more to back the integration of environment issues in national planning as a key priority. For example, foundational land-use planning interventions could underpin work to identify and secure areas of high ecological and biodiversity value.

Important achievements in furthering disaster management included its integration in the 2010-2030 Development Strategic Plan and as a cross-cutting issue in the 2011-2015 MTDP. Further support is needed to enable better coordination among national government agencies and to strengthen local disaster risk management. Four high-risk provinces now have functional disaster management offices with formally established provincial disaster management committees. Yet the sustainability of the committees and contingency planning may suffer due a lack of provincial government support.

UNDP provided technical support to the Prime Minister’s Department for the National Security Policy for establishing an Interdepartmental Committee on Small Arms Control. It aided the formulation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government’s Peace, Reconciliation and Weapons Disposal Policy and the creation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government Peace Division. Early work on weapons disposal was not fully successful as both UNDP and its Autonomous Bougainville Government counterpart were ill-equipped to implement the programme. A greater impact, however, was achieved through assisting local peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation initiatives, such as the Community Trauma Programme.

A consistent weakness was the lack of attention to synergies between different programme areas. A more balanced approach to upstream and downstream support was needed. Capacity development featured in a number of interventions, but the approach was not strategic.

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UNDP provided technical support to the Prime Minister’s Department for the National Security Policy for establishing an Interdepartmental Committee on Small Arms Control. It aided the formulation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government’s Peace, Reconciliation and Weapons Disposal Policy and the creation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government Peace Division. Early work on weapons disposal was not fully successful as both UNDP and its Autonomous Bougainville Government counterpart were ill-equipped to implement the programme. A greater impact, however, was achieved through assisting local peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation initiatives, such as the Community Trauma Programme.

A consistent weakness was the lack of attention to synergies between different programme areas. A more balanced approach to upstream and downstream support was needed. Capacity development featured in a number of interventions, but the approach was not strategic.

With its long presence in Papua Guinea, UNDP has a unique perspective on its strengths and weaknesses, yet contributing to development results has been challenging. While the organization is acknowledged for its substantial potential, some of this has yet to be recognized.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should define clearly the strategic focus of its programme under each thematic area and narrow the range of activities accordingly. An integrated approach to programming is crucial to achieving results. UNDP should pay specific attention to improving synergies between complementary programme areas.
- UNDP should strive for a balance between upstream and downstream work and further increase its support at the provincial and community levels.
- UNDP should put more emphasis on supporting MDG planning and monitoring, and specifically include localized MDG planning to accelerate progress towards the MDGs. UNDP should leverage ongoing efforts on gender equality, HIV/AIDS and the environment to better contribute to MDG planning.
- UNDP should have a sustained, long-term and multi-pronged approach to addressing gender equality at all levels. In coordination with the UN country team, UNDP should adopt a holistic approach to integrating gender equality into all areas of MDG implementation.
- UNDP should refocus its work on the environment. It should support an institutional analysis and capacity assessment of the Department of Environment and Conservation to facilitate establishing indicators for capacity development. Specific attention is required to integrate environmental issues into national policy and planning.
- UNDP should play a more proactive role in strengthening governance capacities at different levels. It should clearly define areas of support for long-term engagement.
- UNDP needs to establish and nurture strategic partnerships to complement its expertise and supplement its resources. There is need to further strengthen partnership arrangements with government departments.
- UNDP is strategically positioned to promote UN values and should make a stronger commitment to address cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and human rights in programme planning and implementation, backed by a specific resource allocation for addressing cross-cutting issues.
- UNDP should strengthen programme planning and management. Urgent measures should be taken to strengthen programme monitoring and reporting systems. Capacity development projects must build on needs assessments and baselines. Projects should have realistic time frames and plans for disengagement.

### ABOUT THE ICPEs

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The Philippines is a lower middle-income country that made progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But after a period of improvement, poverty rose in 2006. Development achievements are vulnerable to environmental challenges and natural disasters, armed struggles and persistent inequality. The positive effects of active representative democracy, a strong civil society movement, and a decentralization process are reduced by ongoing allegations of corruption and a political party system that has not been fully established.

UNDP programmes have backed MDG achievement and poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and the environment, and crisis prevention and recovery. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2009.

UNDP was well aligned with its own corporate as well as government priorities in the Philippines. It drew on its neutrality to operate skillfully in sensitive areas, including to help rationalize governance activities, and pursued innovations such as expanding support for crisis prevention and peacebuilding across the country. A key advantage has been in advocacy, which could be further enhanced around a number of important issues, such as the human security approach in crisis prevention.

Considerable achievements in advocacy for the MDGs included their incorporation into budgetary and statistical processes. The Philippines Human Development Reports have been influential in informing national debates and providing indicators for measuring human security. An early intervention to strengthen the microfinance sector, now expanded by existing banks, was particularly successful and led to strong growth in the client base for three institutions.

Other assistance enhanced the capabilities of the national commission responsible for indigenous peoples’ affairs, but it failed to attract support for a development fund, and issues arose regarding the location of the commission within the government structure.

UNDP contributed to agenda-setting in three areas of governance: justice and human rights, public administration and political development. Achievements included a medium-term action plan to improve access to justice for the poor and marginalized, a national action plan for human rights as part of a rights-based approach to development, and most significantly, mobilization and support for the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and a related national action plan. Other accomplishments included introducing the MDGs in city planning and enhancing citizen participation, advocacy and monitoring.

Despite its achievements, the governance portfolio took on too many themes, activities and partners. In 2007, the programme focus narrowed to support human rights agencies and mechanisms. The new focus simplified the portfolio, enhanced government ownership and included the rights of disadvantaged women. The abrupt change from the previous focus, however, left a number of successful initiatives without an exit strategy and reduced the productive involvement of civil society organizations.

Results in the energy and environment area were mixed, although it had the largest financial resources and a large number of projects. One key contribution was the development of a framework to coordinate environmental policy with a series of strategies, actions and a legislative agenda that has already influenced government priorities and UNDP programme management. UNDP has also provided continual support for meeting obligations.
under international environmental treaties.

South-South cooperation in environmental management of East Asian seas has seen several policy achievements, including a sustainable development strategy and integrated coastal management at specific sites. Support to land- and marine-protected areas made progress but difficulties remain in financing protected areas and identifying alternative livelihoods for affected persons. Assistance with policies and activities to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency saw significant progress.

Despite difficulties in completing a national plan for disaster risk management, there was enhanced cooperation among technical agencies and formalization of early warning systems through local government resolutions.

UNDP assistance to crisis prevention and recovery in Mindanao attracted major external funding and was generally effective in involving communities in rights-based peace and development efforts. Several local governments have established conflict transformation and peacebuilding structures. But income-generating results have been inconclusive, and poverty is still a major source of exclusion. There are built-in obstacles to women’s participation, including a strengthening of traditional decision-making. UNDP has only recently developed a gender strategy to address these issues.

Application of gender perspectives was uneven across programmes. Many activities had more gender-disaggregated data, but gender issues were often not addressed in analysis or work plans. Gender training was not fully successful in incorporating mainstreaming into management structures and processes. Similarly, although the language of a rights-based approach increasingly appears in programme documentation, application varied.

Although the country office continued to be involved in UNDP regional initiatives, with substantial results, there have been some missed opportunities for South-South cooperation, for example, in sharing experiences in the Human Development Report process, and in conflict prevention and resolution.

Some issues related to country programme management. Annual work plans often appeared after the year has started. Hybrid arrangements were developed to facilitate the mainstreaming of project management offices, but such changes still need preparation time. Record-keeping on programme activities was poor. Efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation capacity and systems had not yet addressed the quality of results frameworks.

Programme flexibility and innovation needed to be matched by greater resource mobilization, especially in the MDG and governance areas. UNDP could further leverage its policy work through partnering around the recent trend for policy-based lending by multilateral institutions. Since a key constraint on policy implementation is a lack of financial resources, the organization could also extend work to identify innovative financing mechanisms.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

• UNDP should build on its achievements in institutionalizing the MDGs in government planning and budget systems.
• Re-open dialogue with cluster areas in governance that were terminated when the focus of the practice area was changed and reconsider a role in supporting political reform that would allow greater participation of the poor.
• Clearly define priorities for energy and environment activities around the environment and natural resource policy framework; seek a greater convergence of activities across practice areas for disaster risk management, with consideration of the coordination role with a dedicated staff member being taken by the crisis prevention and recovery practice area.
• Maximize the contribution to peacebuilding in Mindanao and other conflict areas.
• Establish mechanisms to generate and implement synergies across practice areas.
• Learn from the role of private-public partnerships in programme development and implementation.
• Maintain and strengthen the participation of civil society organizations in the country programme.
• Be more systematic in the generation and use of knowledge products.
• Enhance internal management structures to augment the impact of gender initiatives.
• Continue to improve monitoring and evaluation systems to provide feedback for programme management, including related to gender, a rights-based approach and capacity-building activities.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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UNDP IN SRI LANKA

With a tradition of policies to ensure the spread of social welfare, Sri Lanka has achieved higher levels of health and education than expected of countries with a similar income level. This should not mask, however, a number of human development challenges, including those related to the prolonged civil war that ended in 2009. In 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami became the largest natural disaster in Sri Lanka’s recorded history.

UNDP has provided assistance on poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), fostering democratic governance, energy and environment, crisis prevention and recovery, and gender. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2012.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2012: $147 MILLION

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the past decade, UNDP has responded well to evolving government priorities and the needs of the country, particularly in dealing with the effects of the war and tsunami. A significant contribution came from helping to establish a comprehensive national disaster management system. This entailed the creation of the Disaster Management Centre, local disaster response units and an early warning system. The Road Map towards a Safer Sri Lanka, designed with UNDP support, became a framework to identify and coordinate multistakeholder efforts in the next 10 years, and has been widely recognized for its relevance and timeliness. Interministerial coordination and local government involvement in disaster management are issues that remain.

The Transition and Recovery Programme, implemented in post-conflict areas, delivered major impacts through an integrated approach, helping communities regain their livelihoods and their sense of dignity, confidence and stability. Former internally displaced people in particular rebuilt not only their own personal lives but also collective community identities. A direct implementation approach led to greater effectiveness, but left gaps in the capacity of local governments to take over operations. There was no common understanding of the future or the exit strategy of this programme.

UNDP supported the Government to incorporate the MDGs and the Managing for Development Results approach into the national planning framework. On the MDGs, there was steady but slow progress. Application of Managing for Development Results had yet to achieve necessary depth and breadth. Dynamic linkages between national and sub-national entities, and between the central units and other parts of the Government were still largely missing.

Several projects to facilitate poverty reduction generally had limited impact and questionable sustainability. The Uva Poverty Alleviation project was relatively successful in providing poor and vulnerable groups with greater access to assets, markets and financial resources, working through 50 community-based organizations in 25 villages and the private sector. But it was not clear that these organizations can maintain their capacities, including to operate microcredit programmes.

A more proactive approach and leadership would have been needed to tackle structural poverty issues and emerging poverty gaps, such as for a rural ageing population. Some of UNDP’s greatest contributions to poverty reduction in fact occurred where it was not a primary objective, such as in post-tsunami and post-conflict recovery, and the localization of the MDGs as a

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
framework for guaranteeing basic services. These programmes mainstreamed not only poverty reduction but also human rights and gender.

To promote democratic and inclusive governance, UNDP aimed to strengthen human rights institutions, decentralization and access to justice. Initiatives such as the introduction of a Citizen’s Charter, and provisions of legal documents for internally displaced persons were effective in steering public service provision to people’s needs. Capacity development support largely focused on institutional strengthening, yet systems to effectively use new capacities were generally missing.

Field projects for sustainable development and improved environmental management produced results on a limited scale. One clear success was the Montreal Protocol project, where a target to reduce chlorofluorocarbon consumption was met two years ahead of schedule.

A gender dimension was well mainstreamed into UNDP’s programmes, especially field operations. A standalone project to increase the representation of women in decision-making processes made limited contributions, but laid the ground for tangible progress in the future. A stocktaking report and needs assessment exercise helped clarify issues and possible actions to take, and led to the formulation of a National Plan of Action for Women by the Ministry of Child Development and Women’s Empowerment.

Programmes overall had a tendency to focus on the delivery of outputs without paying sufficient attention to the conditions in which these could lead to actual development results. Even beyond UNDP, in the community of development partners as a whole, this tendency to focus on delivery more than results may have hindered effective coordination of strategies and approaches among partners engaged in similar assistance to achieve similar objectives.

Today, UNDP faces the challenge of repositioning itself within a changing context. With post-conflict regions soon moving from a transitional to a developmental phase, UNDP must chart a clear course for its future in these regions. Sri Lanka is solidifying its middle-income country status and developing its own capacity. UNDP is expected to strengthen its policy advice, advocacy and partnership-building roles, while focusing capacity development on supporting national efforts. New issues are also emerging—such as an ageing society, and environmental and economic development links—to which UNDP could contribute.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP must strengthen its focus on the achievement of development results beyond the delivery of outputs.
- UNDP should support national development efforts more through coordinating and galvanizing support around national development goals, and engage in deeper programmatic coordination in the UN country team.
- UNDP should enhance its policy advisory role. To this end, it should engage in building broader partnerships among policy makers, intellectual communities, civil society and the private sector in the country.
- UNDP should more effectively use its successful experiences in downstream projects, and collate experiences of development partners engaged in similar activities to promote a more coherent approach.
- In all programmes, UNDP should more systematically consider how partnerships with the private sector could facilitate the achievement of development goals and build those partnerships into the programme design.
- UNDP’s capacity development should encompass support to the development of systems and mechanisms that would make use of the capacity developed.
- UNDP should ensure that capacity developed in national institutions is sustainable after the completion of the engagement, and an exit strategy should be built into every project design.
- In promoting accountable and transparent public service delivery mechanisms, UNDP should systematically involve both decentralized and devolved structures of local governance as well as community-level organizations, take a policy leadership role in coordinating donor initiatives, and take a holistic approach encompassing human rights, access to justice, local public service delivery and results-based management at national and local levels.
- For post-conflict regions, UNDP should set up an exit strategy for its transition and recovery programme. It should consider retaining some capacities at the province level to monitor the socio-economic situation and coordinate capacity development and recovery support during the transition period.
- UNDP should re-examine where it could make a critical contribution to gender equality within the context of the UN development assistance framework, and provide focused support therein.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Thailand’s remarkable economic growth and modernization have made it a middle-income country with steady human development achievements. Benefits have been unevenly distributed, however, and poverty persists, especially in rural areas and among marginalized groups. Asymmetric urban-rural growth has spurred migration to cities, hollowing out the traditional village society and economy. Rapid growth has threatened natural resources.

UNDP programmes have covered responsive governance, environmentally sustainable development, HIV/AIDS, the international partnership for development, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and human development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2011.

The human development promoted by UNDP has been in consonance with the Sufficiency Economy philosophy at the basis of national strategies. UNDP programmes were aligned with national priorities and addressed important development challenges. Activities contributed to policies and tangible impacts in communities.

UNDP paid great attention and responded well to crisis-affected communities along with vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups. A noteworthy example was the fast response to the tsunami emergency in 2004. UNDP’s relief and recovery programme specifically addressed urgent needs in affected communities and raised their awareness of basic rights. Other cases entailed targeting mobile populations for the HIV/AIDS programme, ethnic minority groups in an integrated sustainable livelihood project, and women in the participatory approach to local governance. The ‘people’s audit’ tool has led to the resolution of issues faced by tribal people who had no access to citizenship. The tool was integrated into national civil service training.

UNDP supported local capacity-building and a multisectoral response to the new wave of HIV/AIDS infections, involving provincial, district and subdistrict administrations. This resulted in a broad acceptance of HIV/AIDS policy guidelines, and a HIV learning network among local administrations in each province.

In general, the organization effectively partnered with government agencies, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. Its effort to involve the private sector and civil society was particularly noteworthy at a time when traditional external funding was dwindling. Some partnerships with local governments were challenging, encountering difficulties due to rigidly applied rules and regulations, bureaucratic structure and behaviour, and local political interests.

Even though UNDP emphasized participation by diverse stakeholders, engaged in a variety of collaborative partnerships, promoted national and local ownership, and aligned its work with national policy objectives, the sustainability of development results was a challenge. Initiatives at the local level were not always taken over by partners, or scaled up or replicated at the national level. Initiatives at the central level were not always integrated into national programmes. Results-based management needs to improve to ensure proper results monitoring and exits from interventions.

There was a strong perspective that the United Nations has an important role to play by presenting the
values that it espouses, and acting as a neutral and conscientious broker to promote social cohesion. UNDP made a great effort in promoting these values through both advocacy, often in support of the UN Resident Coordinator, and its own programme activities. For example, it provided technical support for building gender-segregated statistics and gender strategies, and initiated province-level MDG reports to support targeted policymaking to reduce disparities.

Advocacy, however, often focused on raising the awareness of policy makers and providing information and tools for them to design appropriate policies. But this was not enough to make a social impact. Advocacy seemed more effective when combined with assistance to operationalize corresponding policies.

Support for Thailand’s effort to contribute to a global partnership for development as part of MDG 8 and South-South cooperation took place mainly through institutional support to the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA). UNDP did not fully utilize its strengths, however, namely, its global network and presence in recipient countries. UNDP could have helped TICA to overcome its key challenge: to improve the effectiveness of its assistance by identifying and responding to the demands and needs of partner countries. It also could have helped Thailand position itself better in terms of aid effectiveness and coordination.

As Thailand developed into a middle-income country, UNDP and the Government entered a new mode of cooperation, marked by a shift from traditional development assistance to policy support, and from a project-based to programme-based approach. Yet UNDP was still mostly implementing projects with the funds it mobilized, rather than leveraging government efforts. Given the shrinking funding base, these initiatives could be effective but isolated, thus lacking national impact.

Much of UNDP’s comparative strength lies in its support for governance, including at the local level. UNDP would be justified in placing this emphasis at the centre of its future support to Thailand. It could help further improve public administration and enhance accountability, lay the foundation to address various sectoral policy issues, and provide value-based assistance, such as to promote inclusive participation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should transform itself into a true partner in the middle-income country context. It should strengthen national ownership and sustainability by designing its activities as an integral part of programmes and activities of the Government or other national partners, while refraining from mobilizing funds for and implementing projects of its own that are additional to national efforts.
- UNDP should significantly enhance and broaden its advocacy to reach out to Thai citizens at large, so that ordinary Thai people are aware of their rights and obligations, and the options they have. Further, such advocacy should be accompanied, whenever necessary, by support to operationalize corresponding policies and implement programmes.
- UNDP should work with national partners to sharpen focus on strategic priority issues that could produce national impact in the long term.
- UNDP should continue to expand and strengthen partnerships with local governments, and develop new partnerships with national civil society groups, academic institutions, state enterprises and the private sector.
- UNDP should further explore ways to provide a multisector response, especially at the local level.
- UNDP should examine sustainability much more carefully and systematically before embarking on and exiting from each intervention. UNDP should also put much more emphasis on scaling up pilot or other initiatives by developing such an understanding at the outset and conducting participatory evaluations before the exit.
- UNDP should use its global network more effectively and collaboratively in its support for South-South cooperation. UNDP’s Regional Centre should play a more active role in this regard.
- UNDP should qualitatively improve its results-based management, including with capacity-building of both the country office and national partners. Together with national partners, UNDP should develop a results-based road map towards long-term development results, clarifying the roles the partners should play. UNDP should also build into projects the capacity-building of implementing partners in results monitoring and evaluation.

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As one of the world’s youngest countries, Timor-Leste has been through a period of consolidating stability and building national institutions. It achieved lower middle-income country status in 2007, largely due to oil and gas revenues, and human development rankings have improved. By 2011, however, poverty rates were still at around 40 percent.

UNDP has supported programmes in governance, poverty reduction and the environment as well as post-crisis recovery, facilitating national efforts towards sustainable peace and state-building. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2011.

UNDP has stood behind government efforts to simultaneously address the challenges of stability and the transition to development, making relevant contributions in different phases of building national institutions and capacities. In governance assistance, its neutrality and support without a political agenda were positively perceived. The programme was coherent and well-strategized, and addressed needs across the range of national institutions. Strong synergies with the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and its involvement in all key governance institutions provided UNDP with significant entry points and convening power.

Because of its long-term engagement in the country, UNDP was uniquely positioned to support the electoral process. By 2012, the capacities of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration and the National Electoral Commission had been sufficiently strengthened to independently conduct credible and transparent elections, and political parties were participating more effectively in electoral processes.

Substantial support to the evolution of the civil service led to the development of an enabling legal and regulatory framework, and the creation of the Civil Services Commission. A programme evolution from providing human resource-oriented support to institutional strengthening has backed increased national ownership of civil service reforms and capacity development initiatives, and subsequent allocation of government resources to meet staffing expenditures. Staffing support provided by UNDP and other international agencies initially resulted in huge disparities in remuneration between temporary national and international staff, and the permanent civil service national staff. This created an artificial scarcity of people for permanent jobs, and was resolved to some extent through significant pay scale revisions, and the mass recruitment and regularization of posts across the board.

A local development programme managed jointly with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) made progress in participatory local development, spurred by a favourable environment for decentralization. Government contributions to scaling up participatory local development across all districts resulted in the project delivering to more than its target of eight districts. Progress on creating the legal framework and constitutional structure of local government faced challenges, however, that were beyond the UNDP-UNCDF scope of work. And despite improvements in local administrations’ capacities to manage local development funds, human resource capacity constraints indicate a need for sustained assistance.

UNDP helped improve judicial capacities, a significant step considering that judicial institutions were newly built post-independence. Given a low human resource base and the lack of basic infrastructure, however, the justice sector still relies heavily on international actors.
for policy advice, planning, drafting laws and training legal professionals. Government representatives harboured considerable resentment regarding slow progress in increasing the number of nationals in judicial institutions, even as they also recognized the contributions of international staff.

UNDP support to poverty reduction varied, but overall was not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem. Projects on income and employment generation, microfinance and skills training opened opportunities for poor households. Yet contributions to improving the conditions of economically poor households were limited. Funds were spread too thinly, and the duration of support was not enough to create a substantive improvement.

Greater contributions came through the preparation of national development strategies. Studies for poverty assessments, MDG reports and national human development reports provided support for evidence-based and MDG-oriented development planning, with a specific focus on multidimensional poverty. The Government passed a decree for a National Community Development Programme in 2012, which largely focused on community infrastructure projects, and drew on UNDP and UNCDF experiences.

Achievements on environmental concerns were modest, although the programme helped raise the profile of these issues and establish national priorities, particularly in climate change adaptation. A primary emphasis was on supporting the fulfilment of obligations under different international conventions, and in this the programme was broadly successful.

In response to Timor-Leste’s 2006 crisis, UNDP aided the return of internally displaced persons, community dialogue and mediation. But early recovery projects were largely humanitarian and designed as one-off projects, limiting linkages with long-term livelihood support for sustainable results. Typical of post-conflict response, UNDP played an important role in facilitating the implementation of donor programmes and in-fund administration. To some extent, though, it was not able to find a balance between its fund management and substantive roles. This resulted in conceding its programmatic role in areas such as poverty reduction to other agencies.

Timor-Leste’s rapid progress today challenges UNDP to adapt its position in the country. Its interventions enjoy significant national ownership, and it is poised to play a more substantive role in strengthening national institutions. In this, it should aim for a capacity development strategy with a substantive focus on limited but key areas of governance. As important is a more systematic approach to reducing persistent poverty and inequality.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP programmes should provide the right balance of demonstration projects and policy support.
- UNDP should prioritize support to government policy and programming to address poverty, inequality and unemployment. This approach should facilitate the government’s inclusive growth agenda.
- Based on its long-term engagement in the governance sector, UNDP is strongly positioned to play a larger role in systematically developing human resource and institutional capacities.
- UNDP should promote poverty-environment linkages. To improve continuity and reduce the administrative burden of national institutions, UNDP should adopt a programmatic approach to the environment portfolio.
- With institutional building blocks in place, UNDP should move away from the semi-humanitarian mode of peace- and state-building to a more strategic approach of strengthening institutions and human resources.
- Following UNMIT’s withdrawal, UNDP should have a deliberate approach to deciding on focus areas.
- For effective poverty reduction and local governance programmes, UNDP should strengthen its presence at the district level.
- UNDP should further strengthen its commitment to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, particularly as it relates to access to development resources and justice in the Timorese context.
- UNDP should review programme management and develop an appropriate strategy to adhere to the principles of the New Deal, which include mutual accountability and the use of country systems.
- UNDP should strengthen its technical and advisory capacity to provide timely short-term advice to the Government and to better engage with development partners. It should strengthen results-based monitoring, particularly for programmes at the district and sub-district level.

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EVALUATION BRIEF  JUNE 2003

UNDP IN VIET NAM

Viet Nam has achieved remarkable progress in improving the well-being of most of its people. With political stability and effective leadership, it undertook critical economic and political changes, doubling the size of its economy. Yet the next reforms are likely to be more challenging. New problems are emerging, such as increasing economic disparities, unsustainable use of natural resources and stiffer competition from trading partners.

UNDP has provided support related to private sector and rural development, governance reforms, human development and the rational use of natural resources. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2003, while also taking into account the intended results of the Country Cooperation Framework (2002-2005).

TOTAL PROGRAMME BUDGET, 1997-2006: $160.4 MILLION

FUNDING TARGETS BY SOURCE, CCF II (2002-2005)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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<td>Government cost-sharing</td>
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<td>Third-party and other funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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RESOURCE ALLOCATION BY THEMATIC AREA, 1997-2006 ($ MILLIONS)

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<tr>
<td>Other programmes</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
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</table>

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has pursued some of the most strategic opportunities for assistance to Viet Nam, responding to issues at the heart of the unfolding reform process—a more open economy, reform of the institutional framework for a socialist market economy, and capacity development for the executive and legislative branches of Government. UNDP managed to stay in step with the emergence of major development concerns and was a ‘first mover’ in areas that have since gained increasing attention on the part of other development partners.

Nevertheless, support would be more effective with a more compact programme portfolio focused on targeted areas. Maintaining a strategic position with increased leverage also depends on using coordination mechanisms effectively, give the number of entities offering assistance in Viet Nam.

Perhaps the most critical policy shift made possible through the doi moi reforms introduced in 1986 was a recognition of the crucial role of the non-state sector. Land reforms and the removal of quotas for private initiatives kicked off an impressive period of economic growth. UNDP put its comparative advantage to use by influencing the governmental framework and encouraging measures to support the private sector. Future efforts to support private sector development need to focus on ensuring that the gains of recent years can be sustained and that further privatization does not disadvantage the poorer segments of society.

Governance reform has been broad, covering administrative, legal, judicial and legislative changes. UNDP’s leading role in promoting public administration reform was significant, but progress was no consistent. The most crucial output was a master plan to coordinate various reform components. Pilot initiatives also led early attempts at decentralized governance, which now need to be broadened in all provinces.

Since the advent of doi moi, the rule of law has been steadily replacing rule by administrative decree. Key UNDP achievements included support in strengthening the National Assembly, capacity-building for the courts and the prosecutor’s office, and completion of the Legal Needs Assessment. In the past 15 years, twice as many laws have been promulgated as during the preceding 40 years. The judicial system, however, does not yet meet the requirements of a market-oriented economy. A key challenge is the effective sharing of information. UNDP’s plan to study people’s perceptions concerning access to justice and the rule of law is an excellent step towards a clearer focus for judicial reform.

UNDP advocated the concepts of human develop-
ment and poverty eradication, which are now firmly embedded in national policies, primarily in the 10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2001-2010, as well as in the Viet Nam Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Formulation of the Viet Nam Development Goals represented an excellent example of a serious and successful effort to adapt the Millennium Development Goals to specific national circumstances.

UNDP played a strategic and highly valued facilitating role in improvements in the monitoring of poverty, particularly with regard to the national development strategy. Clear linkages between localized programmes and poverty alleviation were difficult to demonstrate, however. Expectations on how local projects can shape national policy should be realistic, and systems are needed to measure such linkages and ensure learning. A strategy to ensure policy dialogue should be in place from the outset.

Many pilot initiatives on local planning and participation were led by UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, with particularly positive results in changing the mindsets of local planners. While administrative decentralization is moving relatively rapidly, however, it is not matched by effective mechanisms for citizen involvement and transparency at the local level. More active participation in setting development priorities would give poor people a voice in decision-making.

Through its emphasis on environmental concerns within the larger picture of sustainable development, UNDP contributed to increased awareness of environmental protection issues. Important policies and laws have been passed, a new Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources was recently established, and a national Disaster Management Unit is operational.

As Viet Nam enters the new millennium, it confronts a very challenging situation in terms of the pace, scale and complexity of economic and social reforms. Some of the greatest value that UNDP can offer entails capacity-building strategies that open doors and share knowledge on international experiences otherwise not available in Viet Nam. With an immense and ambitious reform challenge, and limited time and resources, more attention to strategies and prioritization at an earlier stage would increase chances for success in implementation, especially through the sequencing of reforms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **UNDP should systematically but gradually enhance its capacity for policy advice and upstream engagement.** It needs to develop further capacity in areas such as legal and judicial reforms, decentralization and poverty reduction strategies, rural development, sustainable development and information technology.

- **UNDP should focus its work around the key organizing principle of governance for poverty reduction.** It should apply its comparative advantage in governance to promote pro-poor policies and capacity enhancement at decentralized levels of government. This would bring improved coherence to current strategies dealing with interconnected issues such as public administration reforms, People’s Councils and courts, local private sector development, targeted poverty programmes and sustainable use of local natural resources.

- **Promotion of advanced methods of communication, information-sharing and learning should be part of all UNDP activities, to help: enhance access to information by the public and local bodies; establish mechanisms to support horizontal learning and replication, in coordination with the Government and other development agencies; and to move towards integrated information systems coupled with participatory mechanisms.**

- **The traditional delivery of services and projects may be expected to change due to the increased influx of official development assistance and the more complex environment for development aid. UNDP needs sufficient flexibility to meet the new demands and succeed in its resource mobilization strategy. This could be reinforced by: more selectivity in project planning, with attention to the replication of successful pilot projects, policy dialogue arising from strategic interventions, and more explicit targeting and learning strategies for locally based projects; strengthening the network of partnerships; establishing flexible funding mechanisms that can be used to respond rapidly to problems and needs identified by national authorities or local agencies and also to facilitate participation by development partners; and ensuring the operational flexibility needed for client orientation, greater efficiency and enhanced accountability through innovation in programme portfolio management.**

### ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Viet Nam entered the group of lower middle-income countries in 2010, marking a significant development milestone. It fully achieved a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), although it continues to face issues related to inclusiveness, institutional reforms, effective management of natural resources and disaster risks, and growing climate challenges.

UNDP has offered support related to inclusive and equitable growth, governance and participation, and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2006 to 2016.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP’s work was relevant and timely as Viet Nam transitioned into becoming a middle-income country. Working as part of the UN Delivering as One pilot, UNDP responded to emerging needs through an upstream policy-oriented approach. Effective engagement with key government agencies cultivated a high level of government trust, which allowed UNDP to lead international dialogue on various policy matters.

One of the key initiatives was the establishment of the Policy Advisory Team, a group of international advisers specializing in various sector-specific issues. Innovative interventions and research provided by the team opened dialogue on sometimes politically sensitive reform issues. Key contributions included collaboration with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank on joint policy messages promoting more inclusive growth and attention to the unfinished MDG agenda, and the definition of new sources of financing through savings from reducing subsidies on fossil fuels.

The team took a flexible approach crucial in addressing complex issues. But its long-term strategy to contribute to a given development programme goal was not always clearly defined. There was more focus on policy formulation than policy implementation, despite much concern over national partners’ limited capacity to carry forward innovations and good practices. Numerous research studies contributed to policy discussions, but their use has not been fully assessed.

The three programme clusters made significant contributions. They established technical, legal and policy frameworks, raised awareness among relevant partners and supported capacity-building. To support inclusive and equitable growth, achievements included helping to improve the quality of national poverty programme documents, and strengthen the national statistical system and monitoring of development goals. MDG monitoring was institutionalized into the Socio-Economic Development Plan monitoring framework, paving the way for the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals at the top policy level. Increased awareness of multidimensional poverty, including in urban areas, led to a government decision to adopt multidimensional poverty as the instrument for poverty measurement.

Under the governance portfolio, oversight functions improved among elected bodies. Human rights’ principles were integrated in legal and regulatory frameworks. Awareness of accountability in public administration increased, and there was wider public participation in decision-making. A key achievement was the parliamentary Committee for Financial and Budgetary Affairs’ contributions to tax laws and the revision of the law on the state budget in line with international practices and standards.

While notable achievements were observed in the
integration of human rights principles and a rights-based approach in key legal documents, so far, implementation mechanisms to safeguard legal rights and access to justice have been limited. UNDP’s support to the Viet Nam Lawyers’ Association and its legal consultancy centres provided a meaningful if preliminary contribution to raising awareness and enhanced access to justice for vulnerable groups.

As part of the Joint UN Programme Group on Gender, UNDP contributed to the integration of gender principles in national laws and promoted women’s participation in national decision-making. But the incorporation of gender in project design was relatively limited.

The sustainable development programme backed research, technical and legal inputs and consultations for the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and the National Green Growth Strategy and Action Plan. Other major outputs included the formulation of the National Target Programme to respond to climate change, scenarios developed with the UK Met Office, and the Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review prepared with the World Bank.

Despite notable accomplishments, all three programme portfolios were relatively weak on implementation, lacking strategies to achieve specified outcomes and outputs. Challenges included limitations in the measurability of performance against goals, sustainability in terms of national capacities, and insufficient collaboration with development partners.

The national implementation modality helped increase ownership and results. At the same time, there were challenges in project design and management. Some projects were highly activity-based; lacked critical stakeholders in design (e.g., civil society); and/or lacked an efficient project management mechanism to quickly respond to and resolve day-to-day challenges. Monitoring and evaluation practices were relatively weak.

Within the UN country team, inter-agency coordination and collaboration issues were highlighted as having affected the quality and timeliness of some interventions. Key issues included a lack of a clear joint implementation strategy, management structure, and roles and responsibilities.

UNDP’s strengths in Viet Nam have allowed it to gain entry points for crucial development interventions. It should capitalize on them to further advance its programme support. While a framework for partnerships has been forged with the Government, more could be done to strengthen joint planning and delivery among UN agencies and other development partners. Improved links between policy services and programme implementation, as well as improved programme strategy, design, and management, could further bolster UNDP’s responsiveness to national needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should continue to focus on upstream policy work as its core country programme strategy, but revisit its overall policy praxis/approach to develop a comprehensive strategy that will ensure that all efforts link to the Common Country Programme Document/One Plan outcomes and outputs.
- In close consultation with the government and UN agencies, UNDP should further strengthen its programme approach.
- UNDP, in close consultation with national partners and the Regional Bureau, should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation practices in its projects and policy efforts.
- UNDP should build more effective partnerships with development partners within the UN system and with international financial institutions when taking an issue-based approach to its interventions, to enhance programme complementarity and a leadership role for UNDP.
- UNDP, in close consultation with the government and the UN agencies, should facilitate innovations in inter-ministerial coordination to address specific problems associated with overlapping mandates and programmes. It should engage non-government organizations to enhance delivery of government services.
- UNDP should develop and implement a clear office-wide gender plan/strategy with accountability mechanisms in place for implementation and achievement of set objectives.
- UNDP should assess existing knowledge development options, including South-South cooperation practices and research/analytical work produced by the Policy Advisory Team and the projects, and develop an effective knowledge management strategy for the country office.

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Over the last decade, Albania has been focused on European Union (EU) accession, accompanied by the evolution of democratic institutions. In 2014, the country gained EU candidate status, which led donors to begin downsizing their programmes.

The United Nations system operates in Albania under a One UN programme. Key UNDP programme areas have comprised democratic governance and local development, with a wide range of efforts related to public administration reform. An economic and social inclusion portfolio put a strong emphasis on support for achieving gender equality. A key area of intervention on the environment was biodiversity. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP assistance from 2007 to 2015.

The evaluation found that the UNDP programme was firmly anchored in Albania’s development priorities, including in terms of EU accession. UNDP also leveraged its strong relationship with the Government to bring attention to less visible priorities, such as social inclusion and youth employment, aiming to support a development process rooted in a human development perspective.

A wide range of activities, to varying degrees, contributed to development results. UNDP’s role has been relevant and important in developing key policies and filling institutional gaps in areas such as governance, social inclusion and the environment. Perhaps the most significant contribution was in furthering territorial and administrative reform. UNDP supported a new law and operational tools for the transfer and amalgamation process after the 2015 elections. The reform was politically highly sensitive, and UNDP, regarded as a neutral and reliable partner, aided the right sequencing of new steps and coordinated support with various organizations assisting the Government.

Regional and local development work produced good project-level outputs, such as regional development plans and small-scale infrastructure projects, but given significant contextual changes, these outputs did not add up to creating a regional and local development model. Almost two years of work in supporting the central Government on regional development policy was invalidated when the EU introduced a new funding and implementation approach.

More synergies could have been explored in the democratic governance and local development portfolio, for example, between territorial and administrative reform and service delivery, and economic governance and regional and local development. The right-sizing exercise undertaken in 2014–2015, when democratic governance and regional development were merged into one programme unit, has enhanced managerial efficiency in this area.

UNDP support complemented government staff needs and capacities, given inadequate human resources in some institutions. While this helped enable these institutions to function, in some cases, capacity development was limited, which may hamper the sustainability of outcomes. The pressure for UNDP to deliver outputs quickly and show results was at times a perverse incentive, encouraging the organization to deliver programmes directly rather than through government institutions.

The development and enhancement of a national gender equality strategy and social inclusion strategy benefitted from UNDP assistance. The organization also backed the adoption of gender-based violence laws and by-laws, and a Roma action plan. But tangible results were difficult to measure since the Government had not made significant advancement in the internalization of mechanisms and policies to mainstream social inclu-
sion principles. Implementation of the national action plan for the Roma Decade was slow due to inadequate resources and insufficient coordination at the local and central levels.

Despite a strong gender portfolio, systematic integration of gender issues in UNDP governance and environment programmes remained a challenge. Many programmes remained focused on equity in the number of women and men targeted; more systematic analysis of gender dimensions was required. There was not yet a multidisciplinary approach to addressing cross-cutting issues—not just gender, but also human rights, social inclusion and environmental management.

UNDP’s support was critical for Albania to develop an environmental legal and policy framework. The country established its first marine protected areas, and in 2014 created the National Protected Area Agency, among many other achievements. The environment is an area where most resources come from external funding, however, which was the most important force determining where, how and when UNDP work was undertaken. Funding for environment management is a key challenge for sustainability.

Within the UN Delivering as One framework, UNDP worked closely with other UN agencies to enhance programme strategizing. It was able to focus on activities in fewer areas, while making more systematic contributions. Beyond UNDP’s strong relationship with the Government, leveraging partnerships with other development actors was important to programme achievements, while a participatory approach enhanced ownership.

UNDP’s flexibility gave it a real comparative advantage in mobilizing resources. Programming documents did not include an objective on territorial reform, for instance, but as this emerged as a national priority in the reform agenda, UNDP stepped forward to mobilize and coordinate donor support through a pooled funding mechanism. This assisted the Government in developing the vision, strategic orientation and related legislation for the reform, leading to the passage of the law formalizing the new administrative and territorial division in time for local elections in 2015. Had this deadline passed, the next real opportunity would not have arisen before 2019.

Overall, UNDP has positioned itself well to play a meaningful role in Albania’s development process, but a major challenge comes from limited funding. Key areas of support, such as governance, are also accession priority areas where the EU is directly involved. UNDP’s engagement on some of these issues depends largely on dialogue with both the Government and the EU for strategic and financial partnership, and increasing government co-financing of programmes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP’s relevance in an EU accession context remains being responsive to emerging development needs and priorities of the Government. Moving forward, UNDP should provide an adequate balance of policy and demonstration of viable development models. UNDP should focus more on service delivery at the local level.
- UNDP should continue to strengthen its efforts for resource mobilization. It should also explore cost-sharing options or technical service modalities fully financed by the Government.
- UNDP should strengthen partnership and knowledge cooperation with other development actors and should focus on scaling up impact.
- UNDP should apply a multidisciplinary approach to cross-cutting issues, including human rights, gender equality, social inclusion and environmental management.
- UNDP should prepare a long-term strategy for its development support to Albania during the course of the EU accession process. The strategy should outline UNDP’s key areas of support to Albania in moving forward with EU membership.

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Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 was followed by a period of economic and social crisis. Today, it is a lower middle-income country, but as of 2013, a third of the population still lived in poverty, with sharp disparities across regions. Other challenges include a high vulnerability to disaster. Some progress has been made in fighting corruption and human trafficking.

UNDP’s country programmes have covered social-economic governance, with an emphasis on human development; democratic governance, with the main thrust being human rights; environmental governance, aimed at regulatory and management frameworks; and integrated border management (IBM). The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2005 to 2013.

Overall, UNDP initiatives were high in quality, sustainable and aligned with national priorities. There was strong national ownership, demonstrated through changes in legislation and regulations. UNDP was most effective in supporting the formulation or reform of national policies and strategies, developing and strengthening national institutional capacities, implementing large and complex projects, administering resources and piloting innovative solutions.

Contributions to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have helped to strengthen regulatory frameworks to revitalize small and medium-size enterprises, such as the National Strategy on SME Development. UNDP bolstered national and local capacities to implement innovative and diversified income-generating policies and practices targeting vulnerable groups, with the aim of reducing inequalities.

There are signs of an increasingly improved environment for trade among regions, and an improved system of agricultural market chains. Successful engagement with civil society organizations and private stakeholders in discussions on vocational education were followed by an amendment of the employment law to enable rural youth to enrol in free training programmes.

UNDP helped the Government enhance data collection and systematization, and develop a unified community database that informs national and regional decision-making, tracks progress towards achieving the MDGs and monitors commitments to human development. Other efforts assisted in building capacities at all levels of government for decentralization, planning, management, delivery of public goods and services, and monitoring social policies, leading to some improvement in the Government Effectiveness Index score, albeit less than an intended target.

In democratic governance, UNDP’s contributed to expanded institutional capacities to address human rights, including at the Human Rights Defender’s Office. Other assistance helped develop the Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities. Despite a growing effort to mainstream gender in programmes, UNDP lacked a clear theory of change for how gender could fast-track development.

With UNDP support, a functioning disaster risk reduction system now exists. While it has not yet been fully integrated in government strategies and plans, the Ministry of Emergency Situations was established along with a national platform to address emergencies.

Contributions to the environment and sustainable development enabled the Government to meet its commitments under the Montreal Protocol and prepare a greenhouse gas inventory. The protected areas system...
expanded by 38,828 hectares, and the Law on Specially Protected Natural Areas was fully revised to enable communities to participate in protected areas management.

UNDP has been successful in mobilizing resources and expanding cost-sharing for IBM initiatives, including to improve the quality of border management services and upgrade infrastructure at border crossing points. However, it was not clearly articulated how IBM initiatives will contribute to human rights and other development areas, which may impede results with strategic potential to advance development. Stronger programmatic synergies could be promoted with trade, local development, poverty reduction, human rights, migration and good relations with neighbouring countries.

From 2005 to 2015, UNDP had 18 programme outcomes, a major challenge for a Country Office with a limited number of staff and scarce resources. Despite significant efforts, results-based management and outcome monitoring and evaluation could better feed into decision-making, learning and course corrections, and could more strategically contribute to outcome-level development results.

On the whole, the Government of Armenia and civil society consider UNDP a reliable, responsive development partner. It is strategically positioned through its strong relationship with the Government, long-term engagement with key civil society organizations, effective outreach to local governments and communities, and unique convening power to foster dialogue on key development issues. It could promote more frequent and inclusive consultation, particularly with government counterparts, to better help the Government coordinate and leverage international development efforts.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should hold further discussions with government stakeholders to redefine a more consultative relationship with regard to strategically prioritizing resources and identifying and selecting programme themes and beneficiaries. Equally important would be to define with the Government ways to ensure that UNDP’s neutrality, efficiency and effectiveness are not compromised. This may require putting in place mechanisms to allow UNDP the flexibility needed to foster innovation, ensure value for money, and make timely and efficient contributions to sustainable development.
- UNDP Armenia should develop the next programme with a focus on fewer and more specific, realistic and strategically targeted outcomes, narrowing the range of activities accordingly. UNDP should prioritize initiatives in which it can bring added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic national partners to ensure national ownership and sustainability of results.
- UNDP should further capitalize on the opportunities offered by IBM initiatives. It should develop a well-articulated strategy, in close cooperation with the National Security Council and other stakeholders, to leverage synergies with interrelated development issues and diversify funding sources with a conscious technical and value-for-money strategy.
- UNDP should make further efforts to effectively document and disseminate its successful experiences and lessons learned in programme approaches and initiatives, particularly the successful pilot ones.
- UNDP Armenia should strive to adopt a more holistic, sustained, long-term and multipronged approach in order to more fully and explicitly integrate gender equality components into all areas of work. UNDP Armenia should focus not only on gender responsive, but on gender-transformative contributions that can fast-track development and address power relations and cultural structures.
- As Armenia is a country prone to disasters, UNDP should explore how to further integrate and mainstream DRR into all its programmes and initiatives.
- UNDP should further improve results-based management and monitoring and evaluation of the programme at the outcome level, and work with coherent and comprehensive theories of change to map assumptions and ensure complex contexts and the multifaceted nature of development are considered to contribute to development, behavioural and transformational change.

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The 1995 Dayton Peace Accords ended the ethnic conflict in Bosnia, and set up the political and governing structure for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite policy reforms and trends showing an increase in the gross domestic product, challenges continue to confront the country, including tackling poverty. The State of Bosnia and Herzegovina also faces a broad range of requirements for European Union (EU) accession.

UNDP programmes have covered poverty reduction, governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and energy and the environment. In 2001, the programme shifted from a local to a national emphasis aimed at policy formulation and the national development agenda. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2008.

Among the most critical areas of intervention was the strengthening of local government institutions where the legal framework is weak and service delivery unstructured. UNDP supported municipal planning and development through bolstering capacity for sustainable development, post-war reconstruction and inclusive resettlement of those affected during the war. A participatory approach based on human rights informed municipal development strategies and shifted the emphasis of municipal management.

Interventions targeting displaced persons looked at the larger context in which returnees move. Support to returnee housing, rehabilitation of necessary infrastructure and services, and sustainable livelihoods have been increasingly linked to the wider community. Although UNDP has tried to encourage social inclusiveness in reconstruction, success has largely depended on the political environment of concerned municipalities.

Support for the creation of the BiH Mine Action Centre represented a successful effort to promote a state mine action system with the required management and technical capacities to operate on its own. There has also been significant progress in demining civilian areas. UNDP has helped reinforce the technical capacities necessary to reduce small arms and light weapons and provided equipment for speedier and safer disposal.

UNDP was not regarded as a key player in public administration reforms, which are led by the European Commission. The organization contributed to specific areas of reform, however, including the establishment of the Federation of BiH Civil Service Agency, and civil service training systems for state and Federation of BiH civil servants. It also supported the establishment of the BiH Gender Agency. To address a weak judicial system, UNDP and other donors aided in setting up a War Crimes Chamber within the Court of BiH, strengthening the capacities of the Prosecutor's Office and organizing an outreach campaign to inform the public about the Chamber's role.

Partnerships with national government agencies have been effective in some areas, but strategic partnership around policy, advocacy, networking and providing expertise was not evident in most cases. Much of the programme was implemented almost entirely by UNDP. At all levels, UNDP can increase accountability for devel-
development results by involving government partners more actively in planning and executing programmes.

Further, UNDP should move on from being an implementer of donor projects to developing synergies with the international community. In particular, attention should be directed towards clarifying a partnership with the European Commission so that UNDP can support, complement and reinforce the accession process.

In the challenging political environment of the country, which includes constitutional power-sharing, UNDP planned for ambitious outcomes, particularly those envisioned for the strengthened capacity of state institutions to drive the development process. However, it had neither the strategic positioning nor sufficient resources to realistically hope for their timely and successful achievement.

While the considerable range of UNDP programme activities was relevant, it was less certain that UNDP could provide meaningful contributions to development results in all these areas. Moreover, transforming lessons into appropriate policy advice for relevant entity- and state-level bodies would require far greater resources for analysis and preparation of information. While some interventions were strong and focused, others seem to have been taken up mostly due to funding availability. UNDP needs to focus its priorities strategically, taking into account its own resources in terms of experience and financing as well as the activities of other donors. In light of the EU accession process, for example, UNDP could have an important role in complementing and supporting EU leadership of public administration reform efforts by providing a perspective on development priorities and contributing to strategic direction.

Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a middle-income country, a status to which UNDP has contributed. It is primarily the responsibility of the European Commission to guide and support accession. The question is not whether UNDP can continue to mobilize donor support for a country programme; undoubtedly it can. The real question is whether it should. At present, UNDP has not formulated an exit strategy. It should look to a date when it can complete its support and devise an exit strategy in accordance with goals to address during that period.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Develop a strategy to transfer ongoing projects from direct to national implementation modalities so that counterparts are able and willing to carry work forward without UNDP by the time of its departure. Increased efforts are required to strengthen the capacity of counterparts to assume ownership of projects. This will require the rethinking of partnerships and developing the capacity of specific counterpart organizations. A modified form of DIM should provide the basis for an agreement with the concerned counterpart agency for each project. This should establish stages through which UNDP can transfer responsibility to the counterpart(s) within a specified time frame. Counterpart organizations must agree to integrate the main principles and systems of the project in their ongoing work, over the long term. This policy should be adopted as soon as possible, and should be reflected in the next country programme document and action plan.

- UNDP should develop a strategy for exiting the country, which would include defined phases and steps to be fulfilled in order to allow for closure of development assistance activities by a fixed date—probably 2014, in view of current commitments. The phases should already be reflected within the next country programme action plan. A strong emphasis should be placed on capacity development, together with advocacy and political dialogue, to ensure that national ownership is achieved.

- UNDP needs to rethink where its efforts can have the most effect, bearing in mind its specific competencies, and ensure that its activities are aligned accordingly. Narrowing the range of activities included in its projects would require developing appropriate partnerships with other organizations that can assume responsibility for complementary activities that are no longer priorities for UNDP. UNDP should strengthen linkages between policy initiatives at the state level and operational interventions at the entity and municipality levels. There should be more emphasis on expanding existing interventions that are successful, and future short-term projects should build on these. The strategic focus should be aimed at advancing the sustainable human development agenda, facilitating progress in administrative reform, and supporting the country’s progress towards EU membership, which includes addressing existing barriers through an analysis of entity-level perspectives.

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UNDP IN BULGARIA

Since the 1996-1997 political and economic crises, when 36 percent of Bulgarians lived in poverty, the country has made substantial progress towards political and macro-economic stability. But there has been little improvement in human development indicators. Large disparities exist between different geographical areas, between urban and rural areas, and between different ethnic groups. Bulgaria continues to face significant challenges including: government reform and decentralization, a shortage of capacities in administration and the need to overhaul its judiciary system.

UNDP has contributed mainly to three programmatic areas: governance, stressing decentralization and municipal management; poverty, with an emphasis on job creation; and the environment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2003, while also taking into account the intended results of the Country Cooperation Framework (2002-2005).

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 1997-2002: $62.7 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2002

<table>
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<th>% of Total</th>
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<td>UNDP resources</td>
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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 1997-2002 ($ MILLIONS)

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<td>Poverty</td>
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FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Bulgaria’s goal of accession to the European Union (EU) was the backdrop to UNDP programming, which aimed to address the dual processes of transition from communist rule and accession from the perspective of human development. UNDP sought to ensure that ongoing legislative and institutional reforms did not overlook the needs of the poor or vulnerable. It brought a unique legitimacy and credibility to work on job creation and municipal management because programmes were not associated with any commercial or political interests.

Through the poverty programme area, with its emphasis on job creation, the Beautiful Bulgaria Programme, the Regional Initiatives Fund and the Job Opportunities through Business Support (JOBS) Programme fed directly into a Social Policy Strategy and active labour market policies. This signaled a turn towards attempting to influence the causes, not merely the effects, of poverty and unemployment—specifically, through the move from cash handouts towards job opportunities. The JOBS network has become part of the National Employment Promotion Plan for business development and employment generation, while active labour market policies currently provide community jobs to 100,000 long-term unemployed people.

The increased priority of social sectors in government policy, a result associated with UNDP’s work, was demonstrated by an increase in the share of social sector expenditures in the national budget from 46.5 percent 1998 to 51 percent in 2001. Over the 1996 to 2002 period, relative to GDP, the share of such expenditures increased from 15.3 percent to 22.7 percent. In terms of institutional achievements, UNDP partnered with the Government and the World Bank in establishing and developing the capacity of the National Social Security Institute, an autonomous body responsible for the administration of pensions and short-term cash benefits.

In its governance programmes, UNDP had a lead role in promoting decentralization and good governance at the local level, likely conducting activities with a wider range of municipalities than any other external donor. Many local officials became acquainted with external development partners, a capacity that may be helpful to the management of EU funding.

UNDP support also fueled national policy debate through the Municipal Human Development Index and provided Bulgarian decision-makers with important operational instruments for municipal level service delivery. A National Plan for Regional Development 2000-2006 was elaborated on the efficient use of local and regional resources for sustainable human develop-
Support in the area of environmental protection was focused on the adoption of national policies and programmes aligned with global environmental protocols and agreements. Legislative changes included the Law on Biodiversity, the Law on Protected Territories and the Energy Efficiency Act.

A high degree of synergy existed across thematic priorities through the focus on identifying areas of vulnerability and disparity in human development, demonstrating local solutions to such challenges, and upscaling and mainstreaming solutions to the national level of public management and practice. A general approach to piloting new initiatives consisted of developing local schemes with seed funding from UNDP, followed by a phase of multi-location replication based on the mobilization of resources from other donors, and finally a nationwide application funded by government resources. Advocacy took place through a number of different instruments and forums, including National Human Development Reports and Social Impact Assessments.

Many of the policy and institutional results that UNDP contributed did not emanate from individual projects. It was the interplay of analytical work in addition to other ‘soft’ advocacy, combined with concrete demonstration schemes that led to change. Some individual projects have influenced several different policy and institutional outcomes. The Beautiful Bulgaria programme, for instance, helped provide the modus operandi for social protection systems and labour market policy. It also gave legitimacy to national policies and institutional arrangements for decentralization and municipal management.

UNDP displayed a high degree of effectiveness in partnership-building. The fact that 63 percent of total resources came from Bulgarian authorities indicated congruence with national priorities and concerns. At the same time, UNDP identified an operational niche that resonated with Bulgaria’s other external development partners. The organization’s most critical advantage has been in partnerships structured around local operational solutions that build a bridge between macro- and microdimensions of national development.

Moving forward, UNDP support could become much more interwoven with Bulgaria’s accession efforts and post-accession practical adaptation to EU institutional and capacity requirements. One priority might be for UNDP to build on its political impartiality to support a national post-accession vision. If it does not achieve this level of engagement, it may find itself becoming redundant.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP needs to continuously maintain a focus on transferring or ‘mainstreaming’ operational management to the national institutions that have long-term responsibilities.
- Building on UNDP’s political impartiality and its involvement in national vision exercises around the world, there might be a role for UNDP to help the Government develop a vision for what capacities it will need in order to benefit from EU membership.
- Since Bulgaria now has a specific date for EU membership, there are implications for UNDP. Where the acquis present concrete legislative and institutional goals and targets, UNDP needs to align its projects and programmes. It could also support the Government in the implementation and management of EU funds.
- Decentralization efforts are entering a crucial phase representing a possible strategic opportunity for UNDP. UNDP may be in a unique position to help ‘pull the strings together’. This will require partnership with the Government, extraction of lessons learned from ongoing decentralization efforts, and refinement of country office competencies and organization.
- Improved targeting of the poor through a refined focus on minorities could be an area in where UNDP could prepare for a substantial and fairly rapid upscaling of its activities, given it is perceived as an ‘expert’ organization, with no territorial interest or ethnic baggage to protect.
- After EU accession, local demand for UNDP services may remain, since capacity development and public management reforms are unlikely to be completed. The office is largely self-financing, but whether it continues to operate depends more on political issues, something that the organization will need help resolving.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Croatia has gone through a significant transition in the past two decades, following its 1991-1995 war. In 2003, it applied for European Union (EU) membership, and officially joined the organization in 2013.

2013 was also the final year of a UNDP country programme with six portfolios designed to support Croatia’s transition: social inclusion, regional and local development, environmental governance, business competitiveness, justice and human security, and support to national development priorities. The business portfolio was phased out in 2011 and absorbed in other programme areas involving the private sector. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2013.

The country programme, based on the evaluation, was in direct alignment with national development priorities, EU accession requirements and relevant UN conventions. The social inclusion work, for instance, aimed at the development of social policies, with a particular emphasis on the protection of persons with disabilities, minorities and survivors of gender-based violence. The extension of energy efficient technologies in the residential and service sectors conformed with national strategies, EU directives and international commitments set by the Kyoto Protocol.

The degree to which programmes achieved their intended objectives varied, however. The social inclusion programme played a significant role in the development of informed and participatory approaches to strategic planning, and a systematic approach to monitoring the implementation of social inclusion policies. But the integration of social inclusion results into national strategies was limited due to capacity and resource constraints.

With slow progress on a national policy for regional development, dozens of small-scale local development interventions addressed the direct needs of war-affected and other underdeveloped regions of the country. The portfolio, however, lacked a clear link to an overarching national-level outcome aiming at the socioeconomic development of those regions. UNDP’s overall effects on the development of a long-term strategy and capacity-building were more evident during the second half of the programme, when support to preparing rural areas for EU accession became the focus.

The business competitiveness portfolio provided important tools, such as the Corporate Social Responsibility Index and Regional Competitiveness Index, to promote private sector engagement in national and regional sustainable development. But the use of these indices appeared limited.

Justice and human security focused on, among other issues, witness and victim support, capacity-building at the People’s Ombudsman Office, community security, arms control and the state election process. The portfolio produced tangible results incorporated in national strategies. The witness and victim support project was one of the most successful efforts, managing to integrate witness and victims’ rights into key regulatory acts, such as the Criminal Procedure Act, while providing services assisting more than 10,000 people. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe praised the programme as “a cornerstone for justice and reconciliation in the Balkans.” The portfolio also made substantial contributions to Croatia’s abilities to fulfil obligations in

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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The national development priorities portfolio initially aimed at capacity-building to enable the Government to plan and implement effective development policies. As the EU accession process moved forward, the portfolio appropriately shifted to sharing Croatia’s experience, including through support to the ‘centre of excellence’ in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. More sustained results may have been achieved, however, if the needs of recipient countries were clearly identified and the effectiveness of capacity-building measured.

Gender equality was promoted through numerous advocacy activities, and included men as part of campaigning against gender-based violence. But in general, there was limited evidence in the programme design of adopting a systematic, strategic approach to addressing gender equity as part of achieving intended outcomes.

Programmes were generally implemented in an efficient manner and demonstrated flexibility, but sustainability varied. The social inclusion portfolio delivered planned outputs in a timely fashion, yet further capacity-building of national stakeholders, including civil society organizations, would be needed to continue the reform process. Private-sector businesses appreciated additional funding channels, such as green business portfolios set up in some banks, although it was not clear that these can be sustained or scaled up.

UNDP’s comparative strengths included its ability to identify and respond to local needs, provide technical expertise and broker partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. In the local development portfolio, a combination of UNDP staff expertise, local presence and critical partnerships with local stakeholders, including county government authorities, helped meet the specific needs of local communities. It became a good example of how a concentration of multiple activities and interventions can gradually create a trusting relationship as a basis for long-term cooperation.

UNDP has positioned itself well in Croatia, despite some weaknesses in national policy impact, measurement of capacity-building and gender mainstreaming. Croatia’s EU accession marks a turning point, with the country becoming a net contributor under the UNDP classification, and therefore no longer eligible for receiving UNDP core funds. The evaluation found that the country programme has provided a strong foundation for UNDP’s work in the remaining phase of the country programme. Some lessons learned and best practices from Croatia should be identified and replicated in supporting other EU accession countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should prepare for transitioning its development activities in Croatia during 2013.
- UNDP activities should continue only in areas where partners demonstrate their strong endorsement and request UNDP’s technical assistance to carry out agreed activities within a time-bound framework.
- UNDP should strengthen performance monitoring and results-based frameworks.
- UNDP should analyse its capacity-building strategy to strengthen outputs and outcomes.
- In the social inclusion portfolio, UNDP should increase sustainability by focusing on capacity-building among national institutions for the implementation of planned social policy reforms.
- UNDP should promote the work done so far in war-affected and less-developed areas under the local development portfolio, and focus further on advocating at the central political level for the need to prepare those areas for challenges and opportunities that await after EU accession.
- UNDP should promote the model of long-term local support by its field offices and encourage the Government to treat the model as a pilot for areas with specific local needs.
- The environmental governance and climate change team should build upon the current portfolio by taking appropriate measures to help ensure the sustainability of its results.
- The Corporate Social Responsibility Index and Regional Competitiveness Index should be promoted.
- The justice and human security portfolio should focus on ensuring the sustainability and ‘irreversibility’ of finalized reforms and those in progress, including through capacity-building, strengthening of partnerships with civil society, and the dissemination of good practices to other countries in the region.
- Continued support should be provided to the fledgling ‘centre of excellence’ established by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs as well as to other Croatian institutions seeking to share best practices.

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Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian Government has engaged in fast-paced, action-oriented reforms. The main concern has been to tackle structural problems of the past through market liberalization and deregulation. Today, Georgia is a middle-income country, albeit with a number of human development challenges related to disparities and vulnerabilities. A large share of the population still lives on subsistence levels. Conflict has caused economic damages and internal displacement.

UNDP’s contributions to development results have been in the areas of economic development and poverty reduction, democratic governance, the environment and sustainable energy, and conflict/disaster prevention and recovery. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2009.

Amid a rapid national reform agenda, UNDP maintained a strong partnership with the Government, providing programmatic support and policy advice when requested and when it saw the opportunity. This sometimes required a persistent approach in promoting a human development agenda or in addressing the plight of internally displaced persons. Many of these efforts have gradually been bearing fruit.

Under the reform agenda, UNDP sought new ways to effectively address income and social disparities, and the vulnerability of a population facing a newly liberalized market and global competition. The introduction of vocational training was a successful example of such an effort. Poverty and unemployment rates remain high, however. Some opportunities for the organization to play a more central role in the policy debate on poverty reduction may come from increased government willingness to adopt active measures to fight unemployment.

Support to human rights contributed to building the Public Defender’s Office, one of the most respected institutions in the country. Other assistance helped elaborate a strategy and legal framework for local governance. Greater awareness on gender issues led to improved legislation on women’s rights and the establishment of the Gender Equality Advisory Council within Parliament. Successful introduction of information and communications technology in key agencies supported public administration reforms towards improved services.

Some downstream projects provided valuable lessons, but sustainability depends on whether they are widely replicated or not. Examples of initiatives that have been replicated include the vocational training programme. Others require further exploration of a successful formula, such as a regional development initiative.

UNDP provided capacity development support to a number of institutions, with particular success when the institutions themselves led these efforts. In some other cases, capacity development turned out to be not very effective or premature, due to a variety of reasons. These included a narrow view of support as limited to providing materials, computer software and basic training, rather than attempting to trigger endogenous changes in institutional culture.

Innovative mechanisms such as the Capacity Building Fund and On-Demand Consultancy Services were much appreciated for assisting policy and institutional reforms, such as to improve the quality of statistics and guide agricultural development. At the same time, such responsiveness to government needs led to a perception by some observers that the organization has become a provider of technical consultancy rather than a promoter of human development. Fair or not, such a perception...
is unfortunate, since it might negatively affect UNDP’s fund-raising abilities in the country.

Other issues arose from a lack of attention to confidence building and conflict prevention, given that ethnic and religious tensions are underlying risks to unity and development. Some development partners and civil society actors noted UNDP’s low profile in advocating its core values.

In addition to its close relationship with the Government, the organization effectively used partnerships with civil society organizations to promote the human development agenda and implement projects. An electoral support project with the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, for example, addressed a combination of short- and long-term needs through extensive training, awareness-raising among voters and the media, and support for the institutional development of the Electoral Administration.

UNDP provided opportunities for the community of donors and the Government to exchange views and gain greater awareness of respective programmes and initiatives. This helped foster the expectation that UNDP would be well placed to support renewed government interest in aid coordination.

As Georgia moves towards becoming a modernized European nation, there is a legitimate concern about the future of UNDP. It could still play an important role, contributing to improving the capacity and functioning of Georgia’s democratic institutions, and redressing vulnerabilities related to poverty and conflict. Important environmental challenges, such as on forest and water, remain, while the risk of natural and human-made disasters calls for continued efforts to improve preparedness and mitigation.

There is no doubt about the national ownership of the development process in Georgia. While continuing to support the Government, UNDP should place at the centre of its policy advice, advocacy, capacity development and other programme activities an agenda to address remaining human development challenges, and gain recognition by all partners and stakeholders of the value that it brings to the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the small size of the country office’s resource base and the uncertainty of future funding situation, UNDP should sharpen the role it plays in the country as a promoter of human development through its policy advice and programme activities, and be strategically selective on the areas of its interventions and support.
- UNDP should take a more results-oriented programme approach than a project-based approach, and make clear with partners what it is aiming to achieve through its policy advice and programmes. For a true results-oriented approach, UNDP should also consider delinking programmatic and organizational structures to make the most effective use of expertise in the small office with a view to achieving results. In designing its programme, UNDP should carefully select indicators that are better aligned with the intended results to be achieved.
- UNDP should also be selective in capacity development initiatives, and aim to support institutions that would engage in an endogenous process of improvement and reform.
- UNDP should continue to support the Government reform initiatives through its innovative Capacity Building Fund and On-Demand Consultancy Services. In doing so, it should try to focus on initiatives that, in its analysis, would help in making progress in human development rather than simply providing capacity supplement to the requesting agency.
- UNDP should explore more proactive ways to promote policy debate, for example, by initiating a discussion forum to address human development issues, supported by its corporate expertise and experiences from its successful projects.
- In view of potential risks posed by the multi-ethnic and multi-religious construct of the country, UNDP should consider introducing, as a cross-cutting issue, confidence-building dimensions in a broader range of projects where possible and appropriate.
- In view of the status of Georgia as a middle-income country and the uncertainty in the future landscape of development assistance, UNDP Georgia should find opportunities to reflect on its value added to the country and articulate its raison d’être to outside partners.

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A series of complex social, political and institutional changes in the Kyrgyz Republic included two uprisings in 2005 and 2010 that overthrew authoritarian regimes. As a result of a 2010 referendum, a new Constitution was adopted, establishing the Kyrgyz Republic as a parliamentary democracy. Since then the Government has pursued an ambitious reform agenda and adopted an overarching five-year National Sustainable Development Strategy.

UNDP has provided assistance in the areas of democratic governance, including the rule of law and civic engagement; a national infrastructure for peace; poverty reduction and socioeconomic development; the sustainable management of energy, the environment and natural resources; a disaster risk management framework in compliance with international standards; and improved social protection for groups vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation of UNDP’s work from 2012 to mid-2016.

UNDP was effective in supporting the continued development of many of the pillars of a peaceful, democratic state. Important advancements in policy frameworks, laws, public services, institutions and socioeconomic conditions took place, at the national and subnational levels. Partly as a result of UNDP contributions, the Kyrgyz Republic conducted elections widely recognized as free and fair by local and international observers. It made progress in building an ‘infrastructure for peace’, in bringing climate change adaptation issues into development planning and in fighting disease. An integrated disaster prevention and early warning system accelerated emergency response and improved preparedness.

Interventions were largely aligned with national priorities, strategies and policies; the country’s development needs; and UNDP’s own mandate and strategy. A high level of national ownership contributed to sustainability, although national capacities will require further strengthening. Despite the significant improvement of the legal framework, for instance, implementation of new laws remains largely constrained by insufficient institutional capabilities.

Programme frameworks were, in general, adequate for delivering results. UNDP’s area-based development approach made important contributions to communities, which could be further enhanced through a well-elaborated, uniform model of regional and local development. Among community-based initiatives, the greatest impact came from activities that solved local infrastructure problems, while those that assisted business and income generation had more isolated effects. UNDP could focus on funding business projects that have potential to induce transformational change in communities through demonstration effects, but are not able to receive funding from banks.

UNDP sufficiently mainstreamed gender in the programme, and reached vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people in rural areas. A next step would be to shift the focus from a gender-targeted, gender-responsive approach to one that is gender transformative.

Some programme approaches were debatable, such as tackling all types of services in supporting better public service delivery. Concentrating on a few areas to demonstrate quicker results might have established
credibility earlier and won stronger support from the public and the Government. A general lack of clear exit strategies or sustainability plans hampered pilot projects. An e-governance system for pasture management committees proved its advantages and benefits, for example, yet many committees and local governments could not afford to establish it due to the high initial cost. One of the few examples of replication was the one-stop shop approach to municipal services; it was adopted by some non-pilot municipalities using their own funds.

Following a 2012 organizational restructuring and the introduction of the area-based development approach, significant improvements were made to UNDP’s management systems. A three-pillar structure—built on area-based development offices for subnational implementation, the Programme Management Unit for overall management, and the Policy Advisory Unit for research, analysis and policy recommendations—resulted in a better division of labour, reduced operational costs and strengthened oversight. This brought the management efficiency ratio of the UNDP country office in the Kyrgyz Republic significantly below global and regional averages. Area-based development offices, among other advantages, made faster decisions and assisted in mobilizing resources by sharing their knowledge of local contexts. Challenges at the subnational level included gaps in synergies among different programmes and partners, and in the harmonization of data gathering and monitoring practices.

Most programme activities were delivered on time, albeit with some delays in grant disbursements from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and in the energy and environment area. Reasons for delay ranged from lengthy procurement procedures to changes in national institutions, including the abolishment of the Ministry of Energy.

UNDP overall has positioned itself to contribute meaningfully to the Kyrgyz Republic’s development progress. The programme has responded well to emerging priorities, building on UNDP strengths such as close partnerships with government authorities and communities, and the provision of impartial, high-quality expertise. Through its global network, UNDP has opened opportunities for South-South exchanges and triangular cooperation with countries in Asia, Central Asia and Europe, on issues from improved border management to reforms in public administration. Diverse partnerships with donors, civil society and the private sector enhanced the impact of UNDP’s interventions. In a 2015 partnership survey, 95 percent of 69 respondents considered UNDP a valued partner.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should further focus its support on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, especially at the subnational level, to implement existing policies and legislation.
- Capitalizing on its rich experience with local development, UNDP should support the Government in strengthening its regional development model and, within that framework, further rationalize, refine and harmonize its own model of support to local development and community mobilization.
- UNDP should further strengthen its results-based management system, and risk management practices and capacities.
- UNDP should pay greater attention to the sustainability of structures and initiatives it creates. Sustainability concerns should be integrated more effectively into the Country Office’s planning and monitoring processes.
- There is scope for UNDP to further strengthen the gender-sensitive approach and the gender-related impact of its programme.

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One of the least developed countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Moldova has undergone a complex transition, politically, economically and socially. In 2011, it was in the midst of many reforms of public institutions, laws and policy agendas. European Union (EU) integration is a fundamental priority, spurring a series of reforms to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the civil service.

Priority UNDP programmes have focused on institutional development; the environment and climate change; poverty reduction; local governance, regional development, civil society and confidence building; and justice and human rights. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2011.

Reforms supported by UNDP in Moldova have helped bolster experience and confidence in negotiations by the Government to make rapid advancement towards EU integration. In particular, UNDP was among the key development partners and the main UN agency supporting public administration reform. Capacity development assisted nearly all ministries and specialized bureaux. The move from conceptual design to practical implementation was slow, however, especially in tough or politically sensitive reform areas.

UNDP has done a considerable job in building the knowledge and capacity of local public authorities. Over one-third have developed better skills and processes in local economic development planning, programme implementation, and engagement with civil society and the private sector. A firm foundation has been established for the revitalization of local governance once the draft decentralization strategy is approved.

Confidence-building measures in the Transnistria region were relevant and brought direct results to the population. In spite of complex political sensitivities, UNDP has much-needed access to and confidence of both Moldova and the breakaway region. It provided efficient assistance in a wide range of areas, such as technical support, infrastructure development and the starting of a business school. Although the Government of Moldova has declared reintegration a priority, the frozen conflict is still in place. To this end, any UNDP programme should remain politically sensitive given the divide between the two sides.

UNDP programmes were fully relevant to the needs of the country, consistent with national targets and aligned with international human rights commitments. There were important contributions to the development and improvement of legal and institutional frameworks, policies, strategies and plans for progress on human rights, and to the strengthening of the national capacity to report on the fulfilment of international commitments. Training, technical assistance, advocacy, political dialogue, resource and donor mobilization, and top-quality analytical work were all used to advance the human rights agenda. But improved approaches and frameworks for applying a systematic human rights-based approach to programming and implementing UNDP interventions were needed.

UNDP was quick to adapt its programmes to ongoing political, economic and social transition in Moldova. Several key elements helped place its programmes in a strategic position. These included the capability to move rapidly and provide leadership for time-sensitive,
critical reforms, such as assistance to the Government in electoral reform. The four elections since 2009 have not witnessed civil disturbance.

UNDP also had the ability to design long-term programmes that were not adversely affected by changes in government. The organization selected interventions useful to any government, whatever its ideology—such as credible statistics for national planning and policymaking, and modernization of public administration.

Taking strategic risks included raising human rights issues in a manner that led to new protections. Responding swiftly to emergencies such as natural disasters increased visibility and engagement in a major crisis prevention and response programme. Successful pilot projects included introducing performance-based budgeting at the local level, with an agreement to extend this across the country based on the results of the pilot.

In some instances, the strategic use of limited core resources, such as catalytic support to the Ministry of Environment, resulted in the enlargement of the environment portfolio and vital results in nature conservation. Flexible modalities for projects included assistance through EU high-level advisers.

UNDP has expanded its resources significantly in Moldova and maintained high programme implementation rates. This contributed to the organization’s overall credibility and programme results. It gained a voice and legitimacy in policy dialogue, leadership in donor coordination, and access to the top levels of the Government across all sectors. Dedicated in-house expertise related to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation has not increased with programme expansion, however.

The rationale and logic of the Government in requesting United Nations agencies to progress towards One UN were legitimate and reasonable. The role and position of UNDP, as the largest agency, is crucial in achieving this objective. Apart from progress towards EU integration, the reasons for this request include limited government absorption capacity to deal with multiple UN agencies and their procedures, and a desire to reduce transaction costs and ensure better programming.

Joint United Nations programming was particularly efficient in addressing complex human rights issues and areas requiring a multisectoral approach. It helped bring gender issues to the top of the national agenda, although there was a need to strengthen and deepen systems for more comprehensive gender mainstreaming to achieve measurable results.

In a time of transition, UNDP moved strategically to become one of the key actors supporting the Government in its aspiration for EU integration. With a well-balanced mix of interventions, overall, UNDP has had a major role to play in Moldova’s advancement towards becoming a modern European nation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should focus on the completion of difficult reforms, consolidation of efforts, and prioritization in the public sector reform, poverty and environmental programmes. In programmes nearing completion, the focus should be on supporting the Government to move from policy and legislative formulation to practical implementation.
- The UNDP country programme should continue to focus on and increase its programme coverage for support at the local and regional levels and play a lead role in supporting the Government’s efforts to implement its decentralization strategy.
- UNDP should maintain active engagement in the Transnistria region and encourage other UN agencies to initiate programmes (preferably joint) there.
- The human rights-based approach should continue to be a priority in programming and implementation.
- UNDP should play a key facilitative role to ensure the development of a UN country team gender mainstreaming strategy. The strategy should foster a collective vision of gender mainstreaming towards coordinated action to achieve results in priority areas.
- UNDP Moldova should continue to strengthen the results-based management system by increasing its capacity for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Given the interest expressed by the Government in coherent UN efforts as well as the success of the joint programmes, UNDP should advocate and provide support for the UN country team to rapidly progress towards One UN through an agreed plan of action.

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Since the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, Montenegro has faced political and economic transitions, regional conflict, economic sanctions and NATO interventions. The collapse of the economy, influx of refugees, a ‘brain drain’, social disintegration and challenges to identity limited people’s choices. These problems have been compounded by weak state administration, widespread corruption and the uncontrolled exploitation of the environment. Since 2001, Montenegro has embarked on an ambitious programme of reform, driven by the process of accession to the European Union (EU) and independence. Market reforms have seen some success, but transition to a modern liberal democracy depends on the ability to effectively pursue further reforms.

UNDP has provided support related to institutional and judicial reform, energy and environment for sustainable development, and social and economic participation. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2005.

UNDP did not have a physical presence in Montenegro until mid-2001. Through an agreement with the World Bank and the Government, a UNDP Liaison Office successfully coordinated preparation of Montenegro’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and attracted support to develop the Montenegro Sustainable Development Programme. UNDP gradually expanded the capacities of the Montenegro office and sought opportunities in other programme areas. Programme strategies remained highly relevant and received the highest level of support from the Government.

Even as a relatively small actor, UNDP provided valuable assistance in developing institutional capacity in key ministries, helped focus attention on issues of poverty and human development, bridged gaps between governmental and non-governmental sectors, and advanced the eco-state concept. Considerable potential remains for continued support to national development priorities.

The Capacity Development Programme was a successful pilot that assisted in filling capacity gaps within three key ministries. Most important among these was the Ministry of International Economic Relations and European Integration, which has become a fully operational unit, using relatively modern methods of managing both the policy-making process and its own organization.

UNDP IN MONTENEGRO

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP was one of the first international agencies to recognize the potential of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support citizen’s rights and shape the country’s development. New opportunities have been created for NGO representation and dialogue with various government bodies. These have taken different forms, from providing a conduit for citizen engagement in policy formulation to strengthening NGOs’ watchdog role over government and private sector initiatives.

The Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy was the first comprehensive poverty policy in Monte-
negro, defining the multidimensional nature of poverty and its causes, and leading to formal recognition by the Government of a ‘poverty problem’. UNDP helped organize a broad participatory process to develop the strategy, including consultative meetings with stakeholders across all municipalities. While the strategy is not the primary development framework for Montenegro, it is nonetheless complementary to the Economic Reform Agenda, and could serve as the basis for or input into a new or consolidated National Development Plan.

UNDP programmes were compatible with the development priorities of funding donors and partners, and exploited UNDP’s comparative advantages. Programme activities have been transparent and, in many cases, innovative. Programme staff were seen as committed and highly motivated, and a viable business platform has been built to support existing programmes and allow for future programme expansion.

Early indications suggest that many components of UNDP programmes will be institutionalized within Government and other national organizations, if adequate programme financing can be obtained. The stated intent of UNDP and the Government to move towards a full national execution modality may, however, not be the best course. Future programme delivery modalities should emphasize the partnership model, which provides greater flexibility to adjust roles and responsibilities according to programme circumstances. Should government corruption continue to be a significant issue, UNDP should retain, at the least, administrative responsibility over inputs. A more flexible modality using a range of partnerships could also have the beneficial effect of better building national capacities, thus facilitating an eventual UNDP exit.

Focused strategic intent and thinking, perseverance, finding niches, networking, partnering, teamwork and entrepreneurial management have all contributed to UNDP’s successes in Montenegro. The organization should continue to build on its strengths, such as support for sustainable development and eco-tourism. Stronger strategic management may entail reducing the portfolio where necessary, and ensuring alignment with EU accession. The medium-term phasing out of the UNDP programme as Montenegro moves towards ‘net contributing country’ status should be planned for early on.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Align strategically with Montenegro’s goal of EU accession. The June 2004 Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and UNDP should be used as the basis for working out concrete collaborative arrangements. The Government may look to UNDP to assist in the mobilization of resources to meet a range of development programme implementation needs, particularly in areas where UNDP is well positioned and currently providing support.
- Use the Sustainable Development Programme, especially eco-tourism, as a flagship. The Government has indicated that UNDP’s main advantage in this broad sector is in eco-tourism in the central and northern regions of the country, where there is a disproportionate share of poverty, environmental degradation and inequitable economic development.
- Support anti-corruption at all levels of programming. UNDP roles could range from supporting UN conventions on the subject to factoring in anti-corruption considerations in programme design.
- Advocate human development and poverty reduction, including in the macroeconomic development agenda. UNDP should strengthen its role as one of the leading advocates for issues that too often get a great deal of policy attention but little in the way of concrete action. Programmes in sustainable development could apply a special focus on impoverished geographic areas and marginalized groups.
- Strengthen strategic management and maintain programme focus, particularly as the UNDP office grows and possibly becomes a formal Country Office with resident coordinator designation. UNDP should not get involved in a wide range of programmes simply because funding may be available.
- Think early about an exit strategy. Montenegro today is a middle-income country that could soon graduate to net contributor country status and be accepted as a candidate for EU membership. A ‘sunset clause’ for the UNDP presence could be placed in the UN Development Assistance Framework and Country Programme Document, to be reviewed annually in the Country Programme Action Plan.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Serbia has undergone a major transition since the conflict and international isolation of the 1990s. Reforms have addressed economic recovery and transition with some success. Yet there have been social costs, such as steadily rising unemployment, and the risk of future conflict has not completely diminished. Continuing efforts to modernize state institutions, implement reforms and address economic inequalities remain central to future security and development.

UNDP programmes covered crisis prevention, poverty reduction, institutional development, judicial reform and related areas. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2006.

UNDP was well positioned for constructive engagement in Serbia, based on its reputation and long history in Yugoslavia. Both the Government and donors approached it to help design and implement programmes; the organization was able to place projects at a high level in new government ministries.

Programme strategies were adapted over time in line with what were, at some points, dramatic changes in the external and political environment. In being willing to experiment and take risks, UNDP made some mistakes, but in the aggregate, chose well and delivered significant development results.

As part of a UN inter-agency mission in 2001, UNDP responded to the crisis resulting from ethnic conflict in southern Serbia. Over the next four years, the crisis abated, and public dialogue shifted to the underdevelopment of the region. To overcome poor governance, considered to be one of the root causes of conflict, UNDP used innovative approaches to draw local government and non-governmental actors into decision-making. It helped build local capacity, introduce new thinking, bring in knowledge of democratic processes and foster local mechanisms for delivery of development assistance. The experience demonstrated that stability and peace can be nurtured by responding quickly, developing and implementing sound programmes, effectively mobilizing resources and building local partnerships.

A Capacity Building Fund evolved to strengthen the Government’s human resources, begin reforming public administration and attract the Serbian diaspora back home. The fund assisted key ministries in acquiring a critical mass of capacity to initiate priority policy, legislative and other reforms. But it was not initially successful in helping the Government develop or implement broader public administration reforms. This was due to the absence of political leadership, coordination and an effective national institutional focal point. A recent change of Government saw a public administration reform strategy developed and improved cooperation among donors in supporting implementation.

UNDP developed tools for education, training, research and knowledge-sharing to modernize the legal profession. The biggest impact was establishing a Judicial Training Centre, a new institution to deliver cutting-edge, demand-driven training to judges, prosecutors and legal staff. The centre organized over 280 workshops, seminars and conferences, drawing more than 8,000 participants, including every judge in Serbia.

Despite increasing importance given to the European Union (EU) social inclusion agenda, UNDP programmes...
on civil society development and economic empowerment of the poor and vulnerable had, at best, limited impact. Work with the Civil Society Advisory Committee, which UNDP helped establish, enabled completion of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. But further civil society contributions to implementation and monitoring stalled.

UNDP proved an extremely important and valued implementing partner, delivering a wide range of services, from policy advocacy and dialogue to procurement, recruitment and contracting support. A considerable amount of assistance provided in the form of 'soft services', such as coaching, mentoring, networking and team-building, was especially valued by ministries. One weakness was the UNDP tendency to be overly visible and claim too much credit for successes.

Early indications are that many UNDP contributions will be institutionalized within government and other national organizations, depending on absorptive capacity, adequate programme financing, and the willingness and capacity of civil society and private sector organizations to take some responsibility for programme implementation and service delivery. Despite the emphasis on capacity-building, however, in some projects, too much attention may have been given to setting up programme implementation or management units, which focused more on time-bound implementation than on sustainable institutional development.

UN agencies have not worked effectively together in supporting Serbia towards its goal of EU accession. Agreement on new areas for cooperation was tempered by the strong relationships of individual agencies with government counterpart ministries, the noted weakness of government-donor coordination and the narrowness of inter-donor cooperation. The World Bank agreed to establish ‘heads of agency’ meetings that may address broader coordination issues. But the main challenge is at the level of key development sectors, such as public administration reform.

Within the context of UN reform, the UNDP office in Belgrade will need to clarify and then communicate its vision, mission and role. UNDP should concentrate on what it has been doing best: implementation. At the same time, it should link its downstream, operational and implementation experience to selected areas of coordinated upstream policy advocacy, in such areas as human security, poverty reduction and decentralization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Align strategically with Serbia’s priority for EU accession. The Government may well look to UNDP to assist in the mobilization of resources to meet a range of development programme implementation needs, particularly in those areas where UNDP is well positioned and is currently providing support. Having worked in EU accession countries, UNDP has substantial institutional experience that could be of great benefit for Serbia through information exchanges and knowledge-sharing.

• Use local development and rule of law reforms as the flagship programmes. Some of the most pressing development needs in Serbia are at the subnational or local level where income disparities persist or are growing, where poverty is most prevalent, and where the capacities of Government, civil society and the private sector are weakest. Further, at certain local levels, the risk of instability or crisis still exists. Major gaps in capacity development, economic and human development, and public administration reform persist at the local level—gaps that UNDP could fill.

• Support anti-corruption at all levels of programming. UNDP can back implementation of UN conventions on anti-corruption, and factor anti-corruption considerations into programme design, performance measures and targeted capacity development. The Council of Europe and European Commission bodies can and should take a lead role in this area, while UNDP can play an important supporting part.

• Strengthen strategic management and maintain programme focus. UNDP is in the early stages of what could be a longer-term partnership to assist Serbia in meeting human and economic development goals. Without concrete baselines or measures of performance, other proxy or qualitative indicators may be needed to measure and assess performance. The organization and structure of the office need to be streamlined.

• Think early about an exit strategy. Serbia is a middle-income country that could soon graduate to net contributor country status. Serious consideration of how UNDP may exit from the country should coincide with Serbia’s strategy for EU accession and economic development.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Following independence and civil war, Tajikistan faced formidable challenges in political restructuring, reorganizing the economy, and responding to the socioeconomic needs of its people. The Government has been pursuing institutional reforms for the past decade, and there have been measures towards macroeconomic stabilization, restructuring financial systems, privatization and controlling inflation. But recurrent humanitarian crises have slowed development and diverted the focus from long-term development issues.

UNDP has provided programmes related to poverty reduction, democratic governance, reducing vulnerability to infectious diseases and disaster management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2008.

UNDP made a significant contribution to post-war reconstruction and transition in Tajikistan. Because the impacts of war were severe in rural areas, the organization made a considered decision to work at the district and sub-district levels, providing support to reconstruct local public infrastructure. At the sub-district level, Jamoat Resource Centres became community-level forums for local governments and non-governmental organizations, furthering community participation in infrastructure projects, and supporting execution of most projects implemented by UNDP and other development agencies in rural Tajikistan.

UNDP successfully backed incorporation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into the national development strategy, and supported poverty reduction strategy papers. Not enough attention was given, however, to related reforms for better management of public funds. Assistance in developing a socioeconomic profile at the district level and monitoring the MDGs was effective, although sustainability was a concern.

Microfinance initiatives provided credit for livelihood and enterprise development at the community and household level, but without sufficient evidence of contributions to alleviating poverty or enhancing gender equality. In general, poverty and MDG initiatives could have been better used to address the issues of migration of a large working population to countries such as Russia.

Through UNDP, the Government accessed funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, comprising 25 percent of official development assistance in the health sector. The funding was crucial for controlling malaria and TB. It provided means and opportunity for UNDP to enhance sector-wide approaches and donor coordination in the health sector, but the organization did not pursue these.

Efforts were occasionally made to address women’s issues, yet gender equality was not integrated into the programme process. Women were included as beneficiaries in the microfinance and Global Fund programmes, but UNDP missed opportunities to analyse and address gender inequality at the household and community levels. It did not use the extensive programme at the local level to address gender issues in a structured way.

Towards improved disaster management, UNDP supported the Information Management and Analytical Centre, part of the Committee of Emergency Situations, in developing an information system and updating data on disasters regularly. It helped the Rapid Emergency
Assessment and Coordination Team in coordinating international humanitarian assistance. More sustained efforts were required to ensure adoption and implementation of disaster management policy. Better links could be forged between disaster management and development; a long-term strategy would be important to avoid repeated flash appeals and temporary solutions.

UNDP established effective cooperation with national institutions such as the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the State Statistics Committee, the Strategic Research Centre under the Office of the President, and the Institute for Civil Servant Training. Further efforts were required to enhance ties between local programmes and national processes. Until recently, there were limited efforts to demonstrate new products under the microfinance project, for example, including to inform national policy on microfinance.

Sustainability has been a concern. Microfinance activities were stable with a high percentage of repayments. Yet infrastructure development was seen more as a humanitarian response, and institutional sustainability was not adequately emphasized. Lack of a clear legal framework and financial and human resources at the district level for maintaining infrastructure contributed to poor maintenance. Water user associations helped increase communities’ understanding of how to use water resources efficiently, but their role needed to be strengthened within the legal framework of the local government.

One of the issues in sustaining interventions was the lack of capacities in government agencies. UNDP capacity development initiatives were largely in the form of training, introducing new practices and, to a lesser extent, policy support. While there were initiatives for strengthening institutional systems and practices, they lacked strategic emphasis. Despite a small component in the Global Fund support for training government staff and implementing agencies, for instance, efforts to facilitate this were not adequate. One major issue is that UNDP interventions have been almost entirely implemented by the country office, with little indication of progress in shifting to a national implementation modality.

Tajikistan has a long way to go in carrying out reforms and strengthening institutions. UNDP could play a major supporting role, particularly in governance, disaster management and health. But it will need to take a more strategic approach, even in areas such as local governance where it was relatively well positioned.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should emphasize policy support and strengthening government systems. Interventions in the area of governance should be further strengthened. UNDP should be more responsive to governance needs in the country and coordinate with other agencies working in the area.
- There should be more substantial support to the government in the area of MDGs. UNDP should strengthen its role in advocating for implementation of pro-poor policies and strategies.
- Use programme partnerships to strengthen donor coordination for achieving development results. Strengthen UNDP positioning in donor coordination.
- Implement programmes through government agencies to improve national ownership and enhance local capacities. UNDP should, in a phased manner, move from direct implementation of the programme to national execution modality.
- Develop a programme strategy for consistency in interventions and for raising funds. UNDP should shift from the present approach of responding to project priorities of donor agencies to a more coherent approach of long-term and sustained interventions.
- UNDP should make an assessment of the role it can play in energy, environment and climate change concerns in Tajikistan, and integrate environment and climate change issues into poverty and disaster management interventions.
- UNDP should pay immediate attention to mainstreaming gender in programme interventions. It should diversify activities to include interventions critical for gender equality and women’s rights, such as support to capacity building for women to participate in development, measures for confidence building and legal services.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems should be strengthened for the entire programme. Baseline information data should be prepared for all outputs and outcomes. Results-based management needs to be strengthened.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Straddling the borders of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, Turkey is a pivotal country in a geographical, political, historical as well as cultural sense. It has made great strides as a regional, political and economic power, and now stands on the threshold of starting its membership negotiations with the European Union (EU). But Turkey also has a history of political and economic tensions and a legacy of regional and social disparities that represent major human development challenges.

UNDP’s programmatic focus has been on governance, poverty, environment, gender and disaster and crisis response. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2003.

In Turkey’s volatile political and economic environment, UNDP’s overall strategy, while not always consistently stated, was broadly responsive to the Government’s priorities, and focused on key human development and capacity-building areas. The organization backed major flagship programmes, especially on important issues of regional disparity and subnational governance, and called attention to Turkey’s urgent environmental and human development challenges. It contributed new ideas and agendas, built institutional capacity, and achieved significant and lasting human development results by applying limited resources flexibly, responsively and generally on a sustained basis.

Given Turkey’s centralized government structure and limited local participation, UNDP helped catalyse greater participation and empowerment of local governments and communities through its Local Agenda 21 programme. One key initiative—participatory city councils—is now expected to be incorporated in a new legal framework for local governance.

UNDP was also instrumental in turning a major regional development initiative in Turkey’s southeastern region from one focused on infrastructure development to a programme geared towards human development. A number of lessons from the programme were applied to a companion project in Eastern Anatolia. National Human Development Reports succeeded in transmitting the international human development debate to a national audience, focusing on regional disparities and gender inequities. The creation of the Human Development Centre in Istanbul with UNDP’s support provides institutional capacity for lasting analytical, advocacy and advisory services.

In the past, environmental concerns were not integrated in national policy debate, nor did they figure prominently in public investment and regulatory reform. UNDP contributed to getting these issues more attention, and building environmental policy and management capacity. It intensively engaged in Turkey’s preparatory work for the 2002 Johannesburg Sustainable Development Summit, and provided instrumental support backing Turkey’s ratification of the climate change convention.

Key ingredients of successful engagement overall have included forming effective coalitions with national, regional and local authorities as well as civil society and the international community. UNDP has found reliable international funding partners, and stayed engaged over long periods. It created local institutional capacity to support advocacy and operational activities. A quick
response to crisis situations drew on the full deployment of institutional resources, albeit at the risk of neglecting some ongoing development initiatives.

Some initiatives were less successful, and even some of the more successful ones faced difficulties. Cooperation frameworks suffered from an excessive scope and fragmentation. This was reinforced by ad hoc responses to various stakeholder requests, including from UNDP headquarters, and by the need to retrofit country priorities into a globally defined set of goals through results-based management tools. Over the last year, UNDP began to narrow the focus of its strategic agenda, although some tough choices remain.

For some UNDP projects, a lack of government commitment and the unwillingness of the implementing agency to disburse government funding as agreed led to early project cancellations or lack of sustained progress. Turnover in government counterparts was frequent, and complicated and weakened UNDP programme impact.

One major line of activity during the 1990s was for UNDP to serve as an implementing agency for World Bank-funded projects under Management Service Agreements (MSAs), an approach being phased out in part due to a layering in project implementation. A similar layering problem, however, has been observed in other programmes where systemic UNDP restrictions against direct implementation (mandated by the Executive Board) require it to channel funds through other implementing agencies, even when UNDP itself is a recipient of funds for programme implementation. This has raised costs and introduced unnecessarily complicated structures. Relatively large volumes of project funds implemented outside core thematic areas have limited UNDP’s capacity to pursue activities where it has a substantive comparative advantage.

The new heavy emphasis on EU accession and the accompanying resource flows present special challenges for UNDP. There clearly continues to be a significant role for the organization, but it must focus on its comparative advantages, and develop a clearly defined strategy in response to multiple stakeholder demands. It should continue with efforts to take a new, action-oriented approach towards Turkey’s EU accession and MDG agenda, finding ways to make its programme clearly supportive of the accession process, but at the same time retaining its own thematic vision and identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build systematically on UNDP’s new mission statement: “UNDP works in Turkey for democratic governance and growth without poverty, in support of EU accession and for the achievement of the MDGs.”
- Focus on the five established core business lines of UNDP in Turkey: governance, poverty, environment, gender, and disaster and crisis response. Use this focus as a selectivity screen when assessing all new initiatives.
- Leverage UNDP’s experience in participatory and transparent capacity-building for local governments and communities and in dealing with regional disparities. Combine UNDP’s international standing, capacity and experience with the strong national capacity and networks that it has built over the years in Turkey.
- Systematically pursue the sustainability and scaling-up potential of UNDP programmes and projects. A very important part of this effort will be systematic monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure the establishment and maintenance of major and sustained partnerships, especially with the Government, the EU and the UN country team. Continue reviving the collaborative efforts of the UN country team, focusing on a clearly defined set of common goals.
- The authorities should stand ready to meet with UNDP at a high level and at regular intervals to ensure that new UNDP programme priorities are in line with national priorities, that commitment to agreed priorities is sustained and that systemic issues impeding effective implementation on both sides are addressed.
- The Government needs to commit its own resources in support of the partnership with UNDP in a predictable and effective manner, and also ensure disbursement of committed resources in a timely manner.
- UNDP headquarters must ensure that its priorities are formulated so as to minimize frequent changes in the structure and content of UNDP’s agenda. Any directives for specific initiatives in Turkey should be consonant with UNDP’s comparative advantage and real partner needs.
- UNDP headquarters should support a move towards more direct execution of UNDP’s programmes and thus help increase its efficiency by avoiding the need for institutional layering of assistance.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Turkey has experienced significant social, political and economic transformations along with important reform efforts in view of European Union accession. Although it is an upper-middle-income country that has experienced rapid growth in recent years, it shares with other countries in that income category issues of inequalities and regional disparities. Willing to exchange experiences and support with other countries, it is both an emerging donor and a recipient of continued assistance.

UNDP programmes provided support on issues related to democratic governance, poverty reduction, and the environment and sustainable development, with a series of horizontal and cross-cutting development goals. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2009.

UNDP has been highly responsive to emerging needs in Turkey, including through a pragmatic approach to adapting project activities to needs identified during implementation. Development results have mainly been achieved by assisting Turkish partners in establishing a more conducive environment for attaining national development targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Particularly important results were accomplished in raising awareness of development needs and enhancing capacities for policy formulation.

UNDP made a strong contribution to local government reform by assisting the Turkish Government in adopting a more participatory approach to local decision-making. It backed the development of pro-poor policy by providing support for enhanced social assistance coordination and policy. Regional development initiatives made a direct impact on poverty by targeting the country’s least developed regions, with successful experimentation on the ground helping to shape government policy on issues such as regional development policy and competitiveness. Work with the private sector was instrumental in establishing a foundation for corporate social responsibility.

The organization provided assistance that was instrumental as Turkey shaped its climate change policy and integrated sustainable development principles into sectoral policies. Through a series of pilot projects, UNDP helped significantly increase awareness on biodiversity, climate change and water issues.

A strong contribution to social equity came from directly focusing on vulnerable groups and raising awareness on sectoral policy implications for poverty. Youth issues are now more visible on the national agenda. The promotion of gender mainstreaming accompanied specific projects focusing on women that contributed to increasing their participation in politics and decision-making.

Despite consistent achievements, a lack of thematic concentration was evident at times, particularly in the democratic governance and environment and sustainable development programmes, which had ambitious lists of priorities. Further, as in other middle-income countries, UNDP support was to some degree characterized by small- to medium-scale interventions with modest project budgets and short implementation periods. This was explained by the intention to first test pilot initiatives before intervening on a larger scale as well as by a focus on capacity development, but the approach risked putting a burden on limited partner resources. It also, however, tested the Government’s commitment and could encourage greater national ownership in the longer term. Between 2006 and 2008, the number of
small-scale projects decreased. UNDP outcomes in general had a high degree of sustainability, with exceptions. Sustainability was emphasized at an early stage of project implementation. It was supported by establishing concrete instruments that project partners could use beyond the completion of assistance, or by ensuring that human resources development was delivered with a view to direct application in the market. Strong advocacy raised the visibility required to motivate political support and contributed to country-wide dissemination of new concepts.

Cases of more limited sustainability stemmed from efficiency issues, such as delayed project activities due to lengthy and complex corporate procurement procedures, and lack of critical mass, which limited the scope of project activities and strong national engagement.

UNDP successfully took on the issue of limited core resources by brokering effective development partnerships with the Turkish Government, multilateral and bilateral partners, and the private sector. These four groups accounted for over 90 percent of the programme budget. Increasing government and private-sector contributions demonstrated the successful inclusion of all relevant actors in contributing to development results.

Information sharing and coordination efforts bolstered UNDP's contributions, both at the sectoral level, such as through thematic working group on gender issues, youth, etc., and with regard to specific groups of partners, such as briefing meetings with bilateral partners. There remains further scope for supporting nationally led sectoral coordination should national partners call for this.

In terms of cooperation for development, there is potential for assistance to the least developed countries in particular, as well as for exchanges with other upper-middle-income economies facing similar challenges related to the environment, poverty reduction and gender.

Overall UNDP monitoring and evaluation practice remained weak, hindering the organization from doing justice to its generally effective contribution to development results. The many success stories could not be substantiated with evidence, which threatened to constrain UNDP's partnerships. While the office developed best practices for monitoring and evaluation, corporate monitoring and evaluation practices generally were less comprehensive than those of other multilateral organizations. This was largely explained by the lack of adequate funding. The country office, for example, did not have a specialized monitoring and evaluation specialist.

The UNDP programme in Turkey was well aligned with the organization's wider approach to assistance for middle-income economies, in terms of responsiveness, partnerships and coordination. Moving forward, however, UNDP's contribution to development results would benefit from greater focus within each programme area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Ensure a strong programmatic thematic focus. A strong thematic focus does not prevent UNDP from developing innovative partnerships in line with its policy on middle-income countries.
- UNDP should ensure a balance between policy advice at the central level and project implementation work on the ground, guarantee stronger integration of social equity considerations at both programmatic and project levels, and pay greater attention to existing capacities regarding individual interventions.
- Tangible outcomes, especially in politically sensitive areas, require resource-intensive and long-term interventions vis-à-vis budgets and time lines. Therefore, UNDP, corporately, should consider financial and human-resource investments in these fields.
- UNDP should continue strengthening consultation and coordination mechanisms with both national and international partners.
- UNDP should continue its efforts in poverty reduction with a more widespread partnership with the private sector.
- UNDP should continue combining its simultaneous efforts for gender mainstreaming and gender-specific project support, along with strengthening cooperation among UN agencies and investing in South-South cooperation.
- UNDP should systematically develop sustainability and exit strategies.
- Ensure systematic monitoring and consider a more systematic follow-up on agreed evaluation recommendations.

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Since declaring independence in July 1990, Ukraine has undergone political and economic transition. Yet it continues to operate far below its human development potential. It has a highly skilled population with a history of technological advance and industrialization; the natural resource base, which favors commercial agriculture, is underutilized; and the country lies at the confluence of the major markets of Europe, Russia and the Far East, where trade is bound to expand rapidly in the years to come. Creating a policy and institutional environment that would enable the nation to capitalize on its human, natural resource and geographical advantages remains central to ensuring sustainable human development.

UNDP has been an active partner in nation building, democratic development, and a shift from a command to a market economy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2004.

UNDP has been an active partner in assisting Ukraine through policy change; better planning; greater awareness of human development; and pilot projects demonstrating new ways of addressing human development challenges. Despite frequent political change, UNDP recognized the Government as its primary client and was highly responsive to its requests. High-ranking government officials served as national programme directors of policy reform initiatives. At the same time, UNDP helped build bridges between the Government and academia, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and the private sector. It acted in a manner consistent with human rights, through partnerships with multiple stakeholders, and with a focus on durable improvements in living standards.

UNDP was dogged in its pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Focusing on their achievement helped to introduce a measure of priority setting. In addition to defining Ukraine-specific MDGs, the Government incorporated them into its long-term development strategy, the ‘European Choice’. It adopted a human development perspective on poverty reduction, including the measurement of multiple dimensions of poverty, inclusion of the poor in decision-making and building on grass-roots experience to inform policy-making.

With greater capacities for strategic planning and policy-making, policy research teams at the Ministry of Economic and European Integration regularly generated macroeconomic and sector policy research. A new policy think tank helped develop legislation for a new land code, and initiate regulatory changes to support rural development.

Understanding of HIV/AIDS improved, and the capacity to respond to it in an integrated, cohesive and humane manner began emerging. A State AIDS Commission guides multisectoral implementation of the National Programme on HIV/AIDS. But a wide gulf remained between declared Government intentions and the commitment of budgetary and organizational resources to respond to HIV/AIDS on a large scale.

Starting in 2001, gender equality was included in the Government’s annual action programmes, and gender advisors were appointed in all ministries and state committees. Legislation is now regularly monitored for its gender content. A Ministry of Family, Children and Youth Affairs was established. With UNDP input, the State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities law was prepared, and a law on the prevention of domestic violence passed. Ukraine ratified the Palermo convention, the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

UNDP IN UKRAINE

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has been an active partner in nation building, democratic development, and a shift from a command to a market economy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2004.

TOTAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES, 1997-2004: $62 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2004

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source Type</th>
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<td>Non-core funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP core funds</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-party cost sharing</td>
<td>52%</td>
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TOTAL ALLOCATION BY STRATEGIC RESULTS OUTCOME, 1997-2004 ($ MILLIONS)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

With greater capacities for strategic planning and policy-making, policy research teams at the Ministry of Economic and European Integration regularly generated macroeconomic and sector policy research. A new policy think tank helped develop legislation for a new land code, and initiate regulatory changes to support rural development.

Understanding of HIV/AIDS improved, and the capacity to respond to it in an integrated, cohesive and humane manner began emerging. A State AIDS Commission guides multisectoral implementation of the National Programme on HIV/AIDS. But a wide gulf remained between declared Government intentions and the commitment of budgetary and organizational resources to respond to HIV/AIDS on a large scale.

Starting in 2001, gender equality was included in the Government’s annual action programmes, and gender advisors were appointed in all ministries and state committees. Legislation is now regularly monitored for its gender content. A Ministry of Family, Children and Youth Affairs was established. With UNDP input, the State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities law was prepared, and a law on the prevention of domestic violence passed. Ukraine ratified the Palermo convention, the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
Elaborating on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the UN Convention for Combating Trafficking in People.

UNDP pilot projects in both Chernobyl and Crimea achieved considerable success for local communities, and regional and local administrations. They helped to promote peace and stability, and to demonstrate that the international community has not abandoned the people of these disadvantaged regions. Other assistance helped the Government develop a process and timetable for ratifying the anti-personnel mine ban treaty. New national legislation prohibits the use of mines by the armed forces and the export of all types of anti-personnel mines.

While governance initiatives were supported in almost all UNDP projects, these generally were limited to participatory dialogues, improvements in legal frameworks, and technical advice and training. Implementation and sustainability of UNDP-supported activities suffered because other dimensions of governance were not adequately addressed.

The imperative of mobilizing resources contributed to a wide spread of activities. Integration of different co-funded projects into a coherent programme that addresses priority constraints in a given area is difficult, and often complicated by uncertain partner funding. In other cases, the need to mobilize resources for various pilot initiatives diverted attention from capacity-building. As a small source of external assistance, UNDP’s impact could be multiplied several times over by helping the Government improve the effective utilization of external assistance, including if more emphasis is placed on decentralized, regional development.

UNDP can continue to play a valuable role by focusing policy attention on the MDGs and by assisting in the development of public policies that can foster sustainable human development. With limited progress made in implementing Ukraine’s European Choice, particularly in the areas of social rights, the rule of law, human rights, freedom of speech and of the media, and good administrative governance, UNDP should put more effort into helping the Government define gaps, and develop concrete strategies to foster convergence with accepted European Union (EU) norms and standards. At the same time, UNDP should support Ukraine in its efforts to maintain good relations with all of its neighbours and to address issues of common concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revisiting the programming framework, with greater selectivity, focus and impact, is warranted. Specifying clearly the linkages between UNDP’s assistance inputs, outputs and outcomes can help avoid mission creep.
- UNDP is playing an important leadership role in interpreting, accessing and developing strategies for the achievement of the MDGs. This should continue, both to ensure that human development is integrated into national plans and policies, and to help Ukraine’s development partners focus on poverty reduction, health protection, education and environment standards. Fostering convergence between Ukrainian and EU conditions are ways of translating MDG commitments into practice.
- There is a need to refocus UNDP’s assistance from supporting economic recovery in general to focusing on exclusion—i.e., on meeting the needs of groups and regions unlikely to benefit from the growth process.
- UNDP should broaden its governance focus beyond training, technical assistance and pilot projects. This requires a better diagnostic understanding and assessment of what is needed to build effective capacity.
- Regional development initiatives require financial support from public and private sources well in excess of what UNDP could provide. This implies a need for partnerships that extend beyond community organizations to include domestic and foreign private investors, multilateral financiers and the financial sector.
- In Chernobyl and Crimea, there is a need to graduate from a small-scale community-development approach to assistance to a more integrated and holistic approach to supporting regional development.
- UNDP needs to consider augmenting its customary approaches to supporting policy reform with arrangements that provide a natural vehicle for Ukraine to graduate from capacity-building as an assistance activity to developing learning institutions that collaborate routinely with strategic partners in neighbouring states.
- Ensuring sound policy advice implies a need for greater selectivity, attention to analysis and quality control.
- UNDP can help build aid management capacity by strengthening government coordination functions, hosting forums on national concerns and encouraging thematic groups related to governance reforms.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Since its independence in 1991, Uzbekistan has been implementing reform policies to move it away from structures inherited from the former Soviet Union. Dismantling the systems, structures and ways of thinking accumulated during 70 years has been an enormous challenge. Remarkable economic performance has accompanied declining poverty rates, but with little change in rural areas. Like many ex-Soviet countries, Uzbekistan inherited a terrible environmental legacy and environmental issues remain a major concern.

UNDP has supported programmes in the areas of poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and the environment, and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2000 to 2008.

During a time of rapid change, including the implementation of key reforms, fast economic growth and a change in Uzbekistan’s relationship with the international community, UNDP negotiated a complex environment and remained committed to providing a sound programme. Interventions towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reducing human poverty made important contributions. In fostering democratic governance, advances were more limited, partly due to a change in the direction of this group of activities. In the area of energy and environment for sustainable development, UNDP helped to improve environmental data and define ecological priorities, and supported preparation of a national integrated water resources management and efficiency plan.

Given strong national ownership of development processes, UNDP’s close cooperation with government authorities proved to be an efficient method of jointly developing effective programmes and projects. Undertaking a participatory approach was relevant at all activity levels, from the central Government and Parliament to local projects. Problems identified and prioritized by local people and their groups—and solved based on joint preparations—led to sustainable results, such as in the provision of water, gas and heating.

UNDP may have missed some opportunities for engagement in areas where its neutrality and long-term commitment to Uzbekistan’s development could have played an important role. For the Welfare Improvement Strategy, UNDP did not capitalize on some of its expertise (e.g., environment and energy issues) and did not conduct an adequate analysis of implementation risks.

Although UNDP has been responsive to emerging government needs, especially in providing technical support to policy formulation, in some cases, it lost sight of the need to focus on projects with long-term strategic linkages. Important and high-priority projects have been implemented in democratic governance, but not conducted strategically. In work on energy, national priorities were unclear and projects were typically scattered. Approaches were occasionally heavily influenced by resource mobilization concerns.

The combination of policy support in the capital with direct interventions at the local level has been balanced, especially after declining engagement of international development partners since 2004. Maintaining the appropriate balance between the two, and ensuring strong linkages between lessons learned at the local level and central policy-making, will remain a major challenge.

Quality partnerships with international development...
actors have included managing projects for The World Bank, such as the Water and Sanitation project. In a partnership with the European Commission, UNDP added value through its expertise in working with local communities and drawing on global best practices. While cooperation is likely to continue, it will be within a different environment as many partners intensify engagement.

The UNDP role is likely to change from overall programme management to implementation of either select programme elements or areas where UNDP has a strong presence. Closer collaboration with donors and international financial institutions should focus on incorporating human development approaches and priorities within investment programmes. Such linkages are required particularly in the fields of environment, energy, water resources and agricultural sector development.

While capacity development has been at the centre of many UNDP interventions, limited use has been made of global tools and approaches. Inadequate use of capacity assessments has reduced effectiveness and limited sustainability. Project design has sometimes undercut efficiency. For example, instead of UNDP and its partners repeatedly conducting training, appropriate institutes at local, regional and national levels could have been strengthened to produce local specialists to take over subsequent capacity development activities. Where UNDP has used this approach, it has been successful.

The organization needs to increase its learning from experience and facilitate greater opportunities for national learning. Greater effort could be made to link lessons learned to national policy development, and to build on successes in scaling-up, as was done in interventions in four regions that showed how strengthening local governance can address the concentration of poverty in rural areas. More could be done as well to extend the scope of knowledge exchange across Central Asia. With its global network, UNDP is in a position to facilitate this kind of collaboration.

In moving forward amid evolving expectations for development cooperation, UNDP can build on many strengths, but do more in defining how it can be most strategic and aligned with national priorities. Given the significance of environmental concerns in Uzbekistan, one initial emphasis might be a drive to integrate both comprehensive environmental concerns and risk analysis into national development planning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In agreement with the Government, focus the programme on a smaller number of strategic interventions where UNDP has clear comparative strengths, is able to offer a long-term commitment and, through relevant partnerships, is able to address the underlying issue in a comprehensive manner. Where there is national demand for interventions outside these areas, UNDP should facilitate the development of partnerships between national and appropriate international organizations with relevant expertise—for example, through joint programming.
- Build on existing partnerships with international development partners, but ensure that UNDP adds value beyond purely management arrangements. Incorporate human development approaches, building on the UNDP focus and comparative strengths in promoting human development, especially at the local level. UNDP can play a role in ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups benefit from interventions.
- Build on existing experience and relationships with local government and communities as a base to comprehensively strengthen and expand existing frameworks to address rural issues.
- Expand the UNDP role in supporting government efforts at aid coordination.
- Strengthen UNDP support to capacity development through a more rigorous and systematic application of corporate capacity development tools and approaches. Use needs and institutional assessments in all project preparations while ensuring that corporate tools are adapted to the specific context of Uzbekistan. Anchor UNDP capacity development interventions in existing institutions.
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to facilitate linkages between all direct interventions and decision makers. Lessons learned should feed into policy-making, and, where necessary, mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate such linkages. It is necessary to strengthen evaluation mechanisms to facilitate the learning process.
- Undertake annual Country Programme Action Plan reviews to increase transparency and facilitate greater stakeholder accountability.

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ARGENTINA
BARBADOS AND OECS
BRAZIL
CHILE
COLOMBIA
COSTA RICA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ECUADOR
EL SALVADOR
GUATEMALA
GUYANA
HONDURAS
JAMAICA (2004)
JAMAICA (2011)
MEXICO
NICARAGUA
PARAGUAY
PERU
URUGUAY
Since the early 20th century, Argentina has had the highest per capita income in Latin America and one of the lowest levels of poverty in the region. Notwithstanding its relatively low rates of growth in recent decades, and the transitory reversals in social conditions and poverty levels, the country has been able to maintain its high ranking on the Human Development Index. Argentina faces significant development challenges, however, as the result of income and regional disparities.

UNDP has provided support in the areas of fostering democratic governance, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty under a human development perspective, and ensuring environmental sustainability. The country programme is one of the largest at UNDP, drawing particularly on funds from the Government of Argentina. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2008.

UNDP’s programme in Argentina was aligned to national priorities and demonstrated good capacity to adapt to changing priorities. After the crisis of 2001, the organization played a key role in convening the Argentinean Dialogue, where the most important development actors, including political parties, diverse faith-based groups, civil society organizations, academics and the media, gathered to deliberate and find solutions to the country’s political, institutional and economic crises. A new culture of dialogue flourished as a result, and later permeated discussions at the national, provincial and municipal levels, supported by various UNDP projects reaffirming democratic values.

Through an alliance with the Human Rights Secretary, UNDP supported the placement of economic, social and cultural rights on the public agenda. The creation of the Sub-Secretary for the Promotion of Human Rights demonstrated new importance given to human rights education. UNDP’s contribution to results in the design and implementation of political reforms was limited, however, mainly because of changes in government’s priorities and restricted conditions for putting new proposals into effect.

The country office forged partnerships with the Government, religious groups and civil society organizations to develop and implement key social projects as an immediate response to the 2001 crisis. The Remediar programme, for example, sought to provide basic medications for public health centres nationwide, using national government funds. In some cases, projects had unexpected benefits, as was the case with the medicine supply project in the municipality of La Matanza. New information on optimizing health-related services led to a lowering of “transaction costs” throughout the procurement lines and health services chain.

Two National Human Development Reports were produced. The first, in 2002, was prepared as the crisis was evolving, and focused on poverty reduction, cooperative federalism and sustainable competitiveness. An extended Human Development Index provided social measurements, at the provincial level, that did not previously exist. This innovation revealed large interprovince disparities in the quality of life and competitive conditions across the country, and had an impact on the design and implementation of policies and strategies for local development. The second National Human Development Report continued to expand on decentralization themes.

Support for mainstreaming environmental approaches, risk management and natural disaster prevention into public policies contributed to planning to prevent natural...
In general, however, the scale of resources allocated to environmental projects is insufficient for tackling Argentinean challenges.

UNDP’s Development Support Services portfolio has decreased significantly as part of a shift towards a more value-added concentration on technical assistance. This began in 2005, when many government emergency programmes to respond to the crisis had ended. The “giro estrategico” or strategic turn has encompassed an institutional and capacity-building strategy, a focus on the articulation of demands for a greater and better quality social bond and human development, strengthening citizens’ capacities for action and participation in a more complex and uncertain context, and deepening a territorial presence in provinces and municipalities with the lowest human development and greater disparities.

These new orientations combine with more emphasis on designing exit strategies for new projects, a recognition that more attention needs to be paid to the sustainability of the results of UNDP-supported interventions. In some cases, benefits have ceased after the conclusion of projects. Particularly for those with an administrative nature, the strengthening of institutional capacities was often limited to UNDP project execution, without clear exit strategies.

The technical and analytical capacity of UNDP staff has been widely valued and recognized. Engaging in a policy dialogue in Argentina, a country with a sophisticated professional and intellectual capacity, is challenging. Having a well-qualified technical staff has been of immense importance in understanding the needs and development challenges of the country and being able to provide sound policy advice. Although this is not a full guarantee of relevance and developmental effectiveness, its absence is close to a guarantee of lacklustre performance. UNDP not only established a reputation for efficient project administration but also for significant contributions to the analysis of development challenges from a human development perspective.

While UNDP was acknowledged as a prestigious organization with the potential to bring legitimacy, neutrality, credibility and knowledge into the development process, some partners expressed concern about its concentration on the administration of government resources. This poses potential risks since it may limit UNDP’s advocacy of public policies with a human development perspective.

Against this backdrop, UNDP’s move towards a strategic role as an advisory and knowledge organization was viewed positively. It works with a wide variety of partners at the central, provincial and local levels, and has strengthened its partnership with local and provincial governments. Overall it is well poised to continue to nurture and expand a more strategic role in Argentina.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Support institutional capacity development with a long-term perspective of recovering the strategic role of the state in promoting inclusive and sustainable human development.
- Continue supporting dialogue and deliberative mechanisms among different levels of government and society (national, provincial and municipal) to reach agreements on how to reduce regional and local disparities under the MDG conceptual framework.
- Continue developing and fostering intersector initiatives, such as the ones recommended in National Human Development Reports and MDG reports, based on new diagnoses and empirical evidence about the development constraints faced by Argentina.
- Deepen the “giro estrategico” and the policy advice and technical cooperation role played by UNDP in the formulation of public policies with a human development perspective.
- Ensure the sustainability of the benefits of UNDP interventions once they are finished by properly considering exit strategies.
- Support the systematization and lessons learned from good practices undertaken by the Argentinean Government in the framework of South-South cooperation.
- Ensure the capacity response of UNDP to emerging consequences of global recession and its impact on Argentina by adopting a flexible approach to programming.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Most Eastern Caribbean countries are relatively well off. But considerable poverty, under-employment, institutional capacity weaknesses, and gender and social inequalities remain. Weak government accountability, poor overall economic diversification and vulnerability to extreme weather events are among other factors pointing to the many pressing and sensitive challenges the sub-region faces in balancing prosperity and risk.

UNDP’s subregional office covers Barbados and the nine members and associate members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), offering programmes on governance, poverty reduction, and the environment and disaster management/response. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2008.

UNDP’s commendable programme in the Eastern Caribbean enjoys a strong profile and reputation. Sustained relevance has been due to UNDP responding to evolving partner needs and maintaining key partnerships. National stakeholders, including net-contributing countries (NCCs), considered the organization’s presence to be very important in highlighting considerable remaining economic disparities and vulnerabilities among and within countries.

In general, UNDP is highly respected for its consistent focus on improving human and social development. Social policy analysts and public sector managers said that they depended on UNDP to advocate on their behalf with politicians and policymakers regarding the importance of ensuring equitable and sustainable economic growth through the continued integration of social protection and anti-poverty measures.

UNDP’s comparative advantage stems from addressing social development issues mainly in the broader upstream areas of leadership, policy consultation, advocacy, technical capacity development and networking. Effective examples of this type of assistance were observed, for example, in the Support for Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean project. It represents a best practice for direct UNDP engagement with cross-cutting regional and subregional social policy issues. Aimed at improving statistical research on addressing the roots of poverty, it helped, for instance, in developing and using Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators relevant to high- and middle-income countries.

To maximize synergies inherent in linking development concerns at national, subregional and regional levels, an overarching subregional programme framework, as opposed to a multicountry approach where each country is dealt with separately, appeared to be fully justified. Yet overall development performance and effectiveness varied. Although many useful short-term results were achieved, including good contributions to country and subregional development objectives, only moderate progress was made towards longer term development results.

A complete withdrawal from direct implementation within countries could lead to a decline in visibility—one of the factors underlying UNDP credibility in some areas. But too much involvement in direct project support in small countries did not seem feasible given the large number of countries, their widely differing development status and the relatively small amount of available resources. In most cases, strategic leveraging of resources or cooperative arrangements with agencies that have appropriate expertise in community implementation would be more appropriate.
Some missed opportunities were apparent in establishing more effective development partnerships with NCCs, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The first group, for example, has the potential ability to contribute more fully to the subregional programme not only monetarily, but also in knowledge sharing through South-South cooperation. UNDP lacked a clear strategy for consistently engaging with non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Weaknesses in management systems included a marked absence of adequate internal monitoring and evaluation. No links were made between critical reviews of progress towards development results and ongoing tracking of resource expenditures. It was therefore impossible to accurately judge overall cost-effectiveness or cost-efficiency. The lack of available overhead from project-based work for the subregional office appeared to lead to chronic understaffing, overwork and unsustainable multitasking on the part of staff. Financial sustainability appeared to need more attention, given dependence on a single cost-sharing arrangement for one large regional initiative.

Overall, all major development stakeholders, including UNDP, agree that the region and subregion need a more nuanced classification of countries to depict the special circumstances and vulnerabilities of small island developing states. That said, UNDP continues to play an important broad strategic role in the subregion, particularly on common development concerns that require a coordinated ‘big picture’ response. UNDP has filled a key niche and is well positioned—with some adjustments—to continue as a lead actor on issues of small island developing states, regional economic integration, the MDGs and climate change adaptation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• The UNDP subregional programme should focus its priorities on upstream initiatives (e.g., policy, advocacy, multistakeholder coordination, networking, knowledge brokering and capacity-building) that will concretely address broad underlying issues, particularly related to poverty and social vulnerability in the Eastern Caribbean as a key development theme.

• UNDP should increase its focus on South-South cooperation and define a clear action plan for implementing and measuring the effects of these activities in a more systematic way in order to build on the inherent opportunities for enhanced South-South knowledge exchange, particularly between NCCs and non-NCCs.

• UNDP should increase consultation with, as well as revise, update and expand its relationships with NCCs to maximize emerging opportunities for upstream, knowledge-based programming.

• The office should develop a detailed resource mobilization strategy with specific targets and timelines.

• UNDP should integrate climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue across all programme areas.

• UNDP should help convene and coordinate key stakeholders in order to support the creation of a standardized vulnerability analysis tool or index that can be used to more accurately describe and rank the countries of the Caribbean, especially small island developing states—NCCs.

• UNDP headquarters should formally designate UNDP Barbados as a subregional office (with an appropriate name such as ‘UNDP Eastern Caribbean’) rather than as a country office, and should work closely with the Resident Representative and senior managers in order to develop a customized management strategy and set of procedures or tools that are better suited to the special requirements of this type of office.

• Overall coherence and results focus should be improved by strengthening the capacity of the subregional office to utilize results-based management and by ensuring that all funded initiatives clearly contribute to achievement of longer-term programme outcomes, with priority given to upstream policy/advocacy objectives.

• Well-defined sustainability strategies should be incorporated into every subregional programme initiative.

• UNDP should selectively increase its on-the-ground presence in countries receiving target for resource assignment from the core funds, at least on a short-term or temporary basis, in order to build technical and implementation capacity within countries.

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A federal republic with a population close to 194 million, Brazil is an average-income country that in recent years has consolidated its macroeconomic and political stability. It has promoted economic reforms aimed at greater integration with the globalized market, and introduced social reforms towards alleviating poverty and inequities, and ensuring universal access to basic education and primary health care.

Areas of UNDP support to Brazil have comprised social and inclusion policies, security and human rights, modernizing of the State, the environment and South-South cooperation. Gender, race/ethnicity and governance are issues cutting across different programmes. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

UNDP’s strategic relevance was high with regard to Brazilian development topics. It positioned itself as a governmental partner in the areas of social development, state modernization and the environment. Programmes supported national strategies to reduce poverty (e.g., Bolsa Familia), the establishment of a national public security programme, the institutionalization of environmental policies and a foundation for government action on South-South cooperation.

State modernization results included implementation of a tax adjustment with extensive impacts on tax collection and macroeconomic stabilization. Consolidated bureaucracies are currently in place in areas most supported by state modernization projects—the Ministries of Finance and Planning and State Finance Secretariats.

Changes in the national context, however, have reduced UNDP’s participation as a development partner. Initially, the Brazilian Government was facing difficulties in implementing the priorities of its agenda due to the scarcity of human resources, the reorganization of the public administration after the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, and the need to promote a rigorous tax adjustment. UNDP focused on promoting human development and offering operational support. With the election of a new Government in 2003, deep and rapid changes began to take place in social policies and in regulations for international technical cooperation. As a result, government demands for projects traditionally supported by UNDP fell.

Starting in 2003, decisions by the Brazilian Government to scale up its capacity were an indicator that it was gaining ownership of the UNDP agenda. The Brazilian state became more effective. Having overcome its macroeconomic restrictions, it structured a professionalized bureaucracy in certain sectors of the federal Government and became more active in social matters. UNDP began managing many of the federal Government loans from multilateral agencies. It also became responsible for procurement activities previously exercised by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, but without cost recovery.

A great effort to adapt to the new context included reducing operating costs, reinforcing operational support to projects and structuring new areas of action, especially public security and South-South cooperation, both topics starting to appear on the government agenda. UNDP also prospected new areas of activity, such as civil defence and consumer rights. A pilot project was launched aimed at developing the capacity of smaller municipalities, seeking private-sector funding and adopting a capacity development model more accessible to smaller municipalities than the traditional model.

To some extent, UNDP remained important in
advancing the implementation of Brazilian public policies. By December 2010, it still managed over 100 projects, some of them extremely relevant and highly aligned to the values and objectives of the organization and the Government.

As the Brazilian Government incorporated various human development topics into its policies and institutions, however, the advocacy role of UNDP also declined. The Government gave ministerial status to the areas of human rights, women’s rights and racial equality. New public policies were introduced, like the quota policy for black students in federal universities. This in the end is a positive result of the dialogue process established over time with the Government and society. UNDP has been working on some innovative products focused on advocacy, such as localizing the Millennium Development Goals.

UNDP’s credibility and expertise in international competitive bidding processes were regarded as highly positive by its partners. The organization underutilized its international knowledge network, however. Support for South-South exchange was restricted to operational aspects and cooperation offered to other countries.

In general, project participants perceived the organization as contributing little substantive knowledge, except in the public security and environment areas. This may stem from the funding model, based on commissions for managing projects. The organization was forced to take on a large number of projects while leaving strategic action and the technical knowledge of its staff in the background.

UNDP used tools and joint programming space together with the other agencies of the UN system in Brazil. A common argument that international technical cooperation still has a role to play in a country with a high degree of inequality and heterogeneous capacities is consistent with the assessments made by different analysts and institutions. But there remains the challenge of achieving a better distribution of public resources among the many UN agencies that operate in Brazil.

In spite of the difficulties of the last decade, there is still space for more purposeful action by UNDP in Brazil. This may have to be more selective and less diversified that in the past. There are new topics in the human development agenda that have not been fully incorporated into the governmental agenda, for example, and that might be addressed in second-generation advocacy.

New funding and action alternatives are being considered, although they have so far proved limited and cannot be interpreted as proof of actual change. But if the current situation is maintained, UNDP’s possibilities for producing substantive contributions and powerful advocacy will continue to be constrained.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should improve the quality and format of dialogue with the Brazilian Government.
- A new thematic agenda should be identified in coordination with the Brazilian Government.
- Together with the Brazilian Government, UNDP should explore new forms of funding for its cooperation programme in Brazil.
- The profile of the UNDP technical team should be gradually changed. Re-qualifying dialogue with the Government based on thematic groups and identifying new demands in the development agenda will require boosting the team’s technical capacity and investing in better strategic planning.
- Dialogue should be established with national oversight institutions.
- UNDP should offer operational support more selectively, directing it to areas with less institutional capacity, and resume the function of contributing technically to selected projects.
- Advocacy, dialogue and knowledge generation should be strengthened.
- UNDP should optimize its functional mix (advocacy, technical assistance, knowledge generation, policy dialogue and operational support) by taking advantage of the expertise that exists within.
- UNDP should adjust its operational rules to optimize administrative processes and reduce the degree of uncertainty, allowing partners to feel more secure in using UNDP management and to reduce response times.
- UNDP should acquire more knowledge and confer greater visibility on the global network associated with the UNDP system. Some changes at headquarters could facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- UNDP should improve operational processes to improve capacity among project managers.

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EVALUATION BRIEF  OCTOBER 2009

UNDP IN CHILE

Chile has progressively consolidated its macroeconomic stability while carrying out institutional and political reforms, giving priority to social policies in conjunction with a special concern for economic growth and poverty reduction. As a middle-income country, Chile has made significant progress in per capita income and is not a major recipient of traditional international cooperation. Technical assistance has been concentrated in ‘third-generation’ reform areas such as the strengthening of democratic governance and improvement of social protection.

UNDP programmes have covered environment and energy, equity, human development, democratic governance and South-South cooperation. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2009.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2001-2008: $204.5 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme government</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>Vertical funds</td>
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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2001-2008 ($ MILLIONS)

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<th>Expenditure</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Energy and environment</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction and MDGs</td>
<td>153</td>
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</table>

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has been very visible in Chile through its national Human Development Reports, published since 1996. The reports’ quality, continuity and timeliness have brought recognition from the highest level of the Administration, and across the Government and civil society. Promotion of a human development approach, which transcends the reports, includes the generation of studies and provision of advisory services. Over time, the approach has taken deep root and is being mainstreamed across public policies. Politicians with different points of view now incorporate elements of human development into their political platforms.

During the first years of the period under evaluation, UNDP anticipated a reduction in funding in Chile. Given strong demand by the Government, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies for support with streamlining administrative procedures for development projects, UNDP expanded its role as operations facilitator, while maintaining its widely appreciated work on human development.

As the Government improved its management processes, especially in public procurement through the Chile Compra programme, the margin for operational projects was reduced. This in tandem with UNDP’s new orientation in Latin America and the need to introduce additional quality control mechanisms for administrative procedures led the organization to upgrade its substantive role. In particular, it added a new dimension as provider of high-level advisory services with a focus on human development, equity and social policy, and multiparty political dialogue.

Activities related to human development and equity have contributed to the promotion of effective and efficient public policies. UNDP collaborated with public officials from the ministries of planning, education and labour in policy design and evaluation. A number of changes were inspired by a human development approach, such as educational assessments targeted to the most vulnerable youth, and social protection mechanisms to detect beneficiaries grounded in an understanding of human capacity. Professional counterparts in different ministries have adopted new practices and methodologies despite the lack of special emphasis on enhancing institutional capabilities.

The participation of UNDP experts in presidential advisory commissions proved valuable in facilitating technical discussions on complex issues, such as social security reform and higher education. Within a consultative and participatory framework, technicians came together from across the political spectrum, expediting political consensus.

In the area of democratic governance, the Consor-
tium for Political Reform became a ‘good practice’ that could be transferred to other countries in Latin America and beyond. Activities to advance the decentralization process, however, have yet to yield significant results. Through different social cohesion projects, UNDP has been instrumental in spotlighting new issues crucial for democratic governance, such as the involvement of the young in the political process, democracy audits, increased transparency and access to information, and gender equity in political representation.

In the environment and energy area, interventions supported a significantly stronger environmental institutional framework. One major achievement was the 2006 National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and Communication to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Other contributions supported more environmentally sustainable urban transport and the adoption of important standards on non-conventional renewable energy.

South-South cooperation capitalized on UNDP’s neutrality, global presence, and knowledge and expertise, but was premised on a narrow definition of Chile as a provider. Such cooperation could also offer benefits to Chile in addressing some of its challenges, such as decentralization.

New and positive partnerships with civil society have broadened the spectrum of partners beyond the Government. But there is still room for a better relationship with other stakeholders, in the environment and energy area, for example, and, eventually, with the Chilean Congress. These partnerships can be crucial in strengthening the role UNDP plays in promoting social dialogue.

UNDP’s strategic repositioning in Chile was critically aided by its capacity to provide high-level technical advice, which increased its responsiveness to government requests for support. Yet demand for such support will progressively diminish as the Chilean State becomes further modernized. This would require a future redefinition of UNDP activities, with one possibility being to meet currently unfulfilled demand as a facilitator of knowledge and experiences from other countries, within Latin America and beyond.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP could make better use of knowledge accumulated in Latin America and other regions, placing it at the disposal of the Government and Chilean society. This could be done in the context of projects already being implemented and in the design of new projects. The active search for, and the use and dissemination of, UNDP’s global knowledge should be an integral part of the responsibilities of UNDP staff.
- Focusing the work on thematic or practice areas improves specialization and helps programming and implementation. Yet, due to reasons both of efficiency and effectiveness, it is recommended to seek synergies and complementarities among those thematic areas. Furthermore, it may be difficult to address issues like decentralization head on, so a more indirect approach may be required to carve out a different ‘point of entry’. (For example, in addition to the work on decentralization supported by UNDP Chile as part of the governance area, that issue could also be addressed laterally through environmental or indigenous people projects, which will require capacity development at the local government level.)
- A simple information system could be developed to provide access to project data, including costs and final outcomes (explicitly including among them capacity development). The information gap on the activities sponsored by UNDP must be closed. Therefore it is necessary to ensure that every project generates a final report, which would provide information on costs and results achieved, as well as on capacities developed. In addition, the Office should make outcome evaluations an integral part of its annual programming activities.
- UNDP could make significant contributions in a relatively short time and at low cost by embracing the knowledge and expertise gained from UNDP’s global experience in the environment and energy areas.
- On equity, more could be done to link the issue of jobs with youth, and to enable Chile to profit from successful experiences in other countries, such as on institutional mechanisms to assess social policy.
- Despite limited progress made on decentralization, several new themes could include support for the reform of central Government structures and management, and the design of decentralization policies from a diversity perspective with regard to the institutional framework, financial resources, and the types of relationships between regional and municipal authorities as well as with the central Government and social actors.

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Colombia has achieved rapid economic growth, at rates among the fastest in South America. Yet it faces several challenges related to inequalities among regions and among rural and urban areas. Over 49 percent of Colombia’s population lives in poverty, and 14.7 percent of its people are indigent. The chronic conflict that has affected the country since the 1960s has been fueled by international drug trafficking, making peacebuilding initiatives much more complex. Colombia is among three countries in the world with the highest numbers of internally displaced persons. UNDP programmes relate to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), democratic governance, energy and environment for sustainable development, and crisis prevention and recovery. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2006.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP’s interventions overall contributed to development results that strengthened Colombia’s peace and development process. The organization provided valuable support related to the measurement and analysis of the MDGs at the national, departmental/subnational and municipal levels. It assisted in the elaboration of a policy document setting out targets and strategies to incorporate the goals into national development policies.

National human development reports generated a number of good practices, helping to develop analytical capacities to address sensitive aspects of human development and conflict. The reports also served as advocacy tools and played an important role in agenda setting. A participatory process in their design, production and dissemination proved key in developing national ownership and promoting their use.

Contributions to democratic governance focused primarily on improving the monitoring of government decision-making at all levels. Anti-corruption and citizens’ participation projects, implemented with the Comptroller General’s Office, achieved positive results in terms of public administration reform and anti-corruption efforts. ‘Citizens’ Monitoring and Evaluation Committees’ were institutionalized as a form of fiscal control, and ‘Citizens’ Agendas’ became a formal mechanism for the articulation of civil society in social policy.

The persistence of conflict over the last five decades has made peacebuilding an obligatory component of UNDP governance interventions. Four projects under the Reconciliation and Development Programme (REDES) followed a basic formula of activating civil society, strengthening local governmental institutions, and building alliances among local, regional, national and international actors. While not new, the approach was promising for introducing development activities in conflict-ridden areas where the national government has a limited presence and no effective tools for fostering subnational or local development. Initial and still tentative evidence suggested that REDES is helping to reduce local conflicts and to provide alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution.

UNDP interventions involving indigenous populations were not incorporated into REDES, however. And although there are some links between REDES and activities involving landmines and unexploded ordnance, there was a dispersion of activities in this area. This was partly a consequence of UNDP’s reactive approach—that is, trying to respond to multiple demands from different national and international organizations.

Towards the effective use and management of Colom-
bía’s natural resources, UNDP strategies prioritized environmental governance, climate change, and linkages between sustainable environmental management practices and other biological resources. Results were modest, with programmes largely demand-driven and more reactive than proactive. The organization in this area has been generally perceived as a resource administrator, and not as a real source of technical expertise to address major sustainable development challenges.

UNDP demonstrated leadership in its coordination of civil society, Government and the international community, helping to bring these key actors together for the G-24 London-Cartagena forum, for example, which discussed crucial peace and development issues and established a development agenda. UNDP’s coordination role among UN organizations was more limited.

The excessive use of ‘development support services’ posed a risk to the organization’s reputation. Colombia is a middle-income country, and core funds have been insufficient to meet the multidimensional challenges of peace and development. To generate additional operational resources, and to respond to the demands of government and international agencies, UNDP began expanding its role in development support services that were largely administrative rather than development-oriented, and included activities such as procurement and the payment of payrolls. While initially successful, this carried significant costs in terms of programme relevance and considerable risks to UNDP’s reputation, mostly related to procurement. On the other hand, through such services, UNDP was able to facilitate the operations of several international cooperation agencies, mainly international financial institutions. A portfolio of 180 projects was developed, although many lacked focus and relevance to national development priorities.

In positioning itself for the future, UNDP should avoid spreading itself too thinly. Rather, it should concentrate its resources on areas of crucial importance such as peacebuilding. UNDP in general could also help Colombia to overcome the lack of reliable and comprehensive information required to design, implement, monitor and evaluate peace and development interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• UNDP should disseminate and deepen the debate around the first MDG monitoring report for Colombia.
• UNDP could play a brokering role with other development agencies to bolster peace and recovery efforts through productive activities and other development projects.
• Given its neutral position, the organization should encourage a dialogue about the eventual consequences of the government’s social and fiscal policy, which is currently based on a combination of transfers and subsidies, with doubtful outcomes in terms of equity, effectiveness and sustainability.
• UNDP could draw further from the expertise of its regional and/or international centres, and mobilize South-South cooperation to provide its country programmes with additional human resources, experience and support that could significantly increase their substantive added value.
• Given encouraging results, systematic evaluation, at regular intervals, of the REDES approach to peacebuilding, conflict resolution and strengthening of democratic governance at the local level should be required in the next UNDP programming cycle.
• To extend successes achieved in Bogotá to other regions and localities, UNDP should undertake investments in knowledge creation and in distilling lessons learned to facilitate their uptake by local planners and decision-makers.
• UNDP should elaborate a strategy linking natural resource management to conflict prevention.
• An analysis of the recently completed US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement should explore the implications of resulting energy and environmental regulations for Colombia’s competitiveness. UNDP should also help convene a national dialogue on key environmental and energy challenges to sustainable development.
• The next UNDP programming cycle should consider expanding interventions to the country’s indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations. To guide such efforts, a strategy should be elaborated, with particular attention to the integration of these groups within the REDES and landmine programmes.
• The prevention strategy covering antipersonnel mines and active abandoned munitions requires more effective coordination within the UN system, and between the UN system and the Vice Presidency’s Mine Observatory.

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UNDP IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is a medium-high income country that devotes significant resources to social investment. It has achieved progress in education, health and an increase in per capita income, but with slowing momentum and concerns about inequalities. Under a strongly centralized state, little political and administrative decision-making has devolved to subnational levels. A worrying problem in the last decade has been citizen security.

UNDP has supported programmes on human development; reduction of poverty, inequality and social exclusion; the environment, energy and risk management; democracy and governance; and gender equality. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

In Costa Rica, UNDP had a coherent, effective and substantive programme that made significant contributions to government priorities and the main national human development challenges, despite meagre financial resources. UNDP’s most solid achievements related to mainstreaming human development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), backing the formulation of public policies and national development plans, and taking initiatives to ensure compliance with international agreements on environmental protection.

On poverty reduction, inequality and social exclusion, UNDP helped the Government strengthen capacities for conceptualizing and measuring social and economic variables. State capacity to give decentralized attention to disadvantaged populations expanded, including through monitoring of the MDGs and the creation of environmentally sustainable economic enterprises.

UNDP also had bearing through practical proposals for public policy. The National Human Development Report on security catalysed actions to address gaps and inequalities. The concept was incorporated into the Integrated and Sustainable Policy for Citizen Security and the Promotion of Social Peace, local security schemes and various prevention programmes.

On gender equality, UNDP supported adjustments of some public policies, including to expand opportunities for representation. It aided in strengthening a gender-sensitive approach in the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the private sector. National Statistical Indicators for Gender and Economic Management were developed. Inadequate dissemination of good practices resulted in failure to fully capitalize on them, however, and overall the integration of the equality
and gender equity approach was uneven.

With its ethical standards and technical prestige, UNDP was a sought-after partner by the State and society for work on capacity development and knowledge management within the framework of human rights and the values of the United Nations. The organization responded promptly to the specific development challenges faced by a middle-income country.

Insufficient attention to monitoring, evaluation and project formulation had consequences such as the insufficient accuracy of expected results and indicators. Evaluation was scarce and, where present, rarely had any practical bearing. The design and formulation of projects did not sufficiently anticipate and mitigate risks.

Weaknesses in project monitoring and counterpart follow-up led partners to report that UNDP needs to maintain a closer and more consistent link with them and beneficiaries. Projects often involved shared management by a variety of partners, which entailed organizational complications and led to obstacles or delays in execution. Where scenarios of controversy or resistance arose, there were no strategies for communication, advocacy and alliance-building.

The coordination and joint work of the United Nations system in Costa Rica has been progressively strengthened through successive management efforts of the Resident Coordinators and the involvement of Country Teams. An expression of more active cooperation was the creation of joint programmes and the common monitoring system. Some partners reported some coordination difficulties from the complex procedures of participating agencies.

Financial constraints have been a major challenge. Since 2004, the Government has not contributed financially to the UNDP programme; most resources come from external sources. The effort required to raise funds is costly in terms of human resources, especially considering the small staff. Particularly troubling is the prospect of staff members having to devote more time to fundraising at the expense of programmatic attention.

UNDP has accumulated experience and conceptual capital to address many of the challenges of Costa Rica. It has room both to expand its contribution in the country and to disseminate learning in other places, yet its position remains complex due to its financial situation, however. With the imminent graduation of Costa Rica to a net contributor country to the United Nations, UNDP will need to devise a new model to sustain its support.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should scale up the integration of human development in the environmental field and strengthen the learning and content coming from these areas into others to advance implementation and synergies with wider priority regional approaches and strategies of donors.
- The country office should be more proactive in the areas of transportation, renewable energy and water governance.
- In the area of democratic governance, UNDP should strengthen practical impact, efficiency and ownership as better conditions for sustainability and replication. An important element is to achieve greater involvement of subnational authorities. The country office can further deepen the programme on security and formalize its current role in the programme to achieve the expected results.
- In the area of gender equality and equity, the country office should integrate this set of issues into the other programme areas, encourage more robust and extensive partnerships, and expand outreach to the media.
- UNDP should reinvigorate the National Human Development Report and place special emphasis on supporting the Government in formulating and implementing long-term strategies to reduce poverty with a focus on human development.
- The country office should review project implementation mechanisms as well as develop and actively implement risk forecasting and mitigation. It should strengthen the formulation of expected results and indicators and baselines, and congruently align evaluation and monitoring for improved results-oriented management.
- The country office should seek ways to more effectively streamline business processes, including in taking up projects according both to priorities and a realistic analysis of human resources.
- UNDP, with appropriate institutional support, should explore with the State how the latter could contribute to a new model to retain and enhance the contribution of UNDP to development in the country.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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The Dominican Republic has emerged as an upper-middle-income country with a high ranking on the Human Development Index. But it still struggles with deep-rooted challenges, such as wide inequalities, and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

UNDP has supported democratic governance, social and economic inclusion, empowerment of women and vulnerable groups, and sustainable development and risk management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2015.

The evaluation chronicled a broad recognition of UNDP’s contributions to the Dominican Republic, including to political dialogue, and to the design and implementation of public policies and national, institutional and legal frameworks, with a focus on human rights and sustainable human development. Performance was generally very good. Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency rated high in most cases, and sustainability as medium to high.

With UNDP assistance, the country made progress in modernizing its State structure, ensuring greater transparency and better performance. An increase in budget items for the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic recognized the growing relevance of this institution. New decrees promoted accountability, decentralization and efficiency in spending, such as through a Code of Ethical Guidelines and the creation of the Directorate of Government Ethics and Integrity. A situational analysis on the financial management of municipalities and municipal districts became an important input for strategies to build capacity and increase transparency.

A number of projects helped improved the scope, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the social protection system, and the access of the target population to quality education and health services. UNDP assisted with developing instruments for monetary transfers, such as an integrated social protection monitoring and evaluation system, as well as audits for verifying compliance with transfer requirements. SIUBEN, a consolidated system to increase the efficiency of social protection spending, expanded its scope of measurement, including through a Vulnerability to Climate Shocks Index that makes it possible to focus social interventions in homes most vulnerable to hydrometeorological effects. Sex-disaggregated information about household living conditions informed more accurate gender analyses.

UNDP made a significant contribution to institutional strengthening and gender and human rights mainstreaming, although outcomes in these areas can be improved. It provided well-received assistance in monitoring compliance with international commitments made by the country, such as the Rio+20 outcome and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as in supporting public-private dialogues in the lead-up to the global agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals. The last also entailed conducting the My World survey, which captured 65,000 responses and involved more than 50 institutions in 20 provinces.

Significant progress was recognized in the work of United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office, which assumed leadership for humanitarian aid after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The support of the Dominican Republic to Haiti in crisis management and recovery has been and will remain crucial for both countries. Post-earthquake, there was an evident shift in national interest in comprehensive risk management.

South-South cooperation initiatives encompassed several activities to promote efforts with Haiti and other...
Caribbean nations to advance environmental management, such as through the Binational Artibonite River Basin project on the border river basin and forest areas. The binational Green Border project received a regional UNDP prize for South-South cooperation, awarded to the Dominican Republic and Haiti for sharing experiences and strategies, and transferring environmental methodologies and capacities. South-South cooperation, however, is still not a widespread practice. Further efforts are required to take advantage of the UNDP knowledge network at the international level, and, in particular, in the Latin American and Caribbean region, which is considered one of the main added values of UNDP.

For the Dominican Republic, designation as an upper-middle-income country has meant a draw-down in international cooperation and a need to optimize resources that remain. The evaluation suggested that UNDP work on identifying the main development gaps and assist national partners in establishing a dialogue at the international level with proposals for innovative development mechanisms.

Major efforts are still required in poverty and human development, as well as public policies that target vulnerable groups through the life cycle—children; youth, especially young job seekers; women and the elderly. This is an important challenge for UNDP, since it suggests maintaining the same lines of past and current programmes while exploring new opportunities and strategic directions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Identify new, innovative ways to ensure ownership and sustainability in the implementation of plans, programmes and projects under the paradigm of sustainable human development (SHD) and the SDGs, as well as initiatives supported by UNDP, with the Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations.
- Keep the focus on SHD, an area in which UNDP has national leadership and brings added value.
- Define a strategy for gender mainstreaming in the country office that is aligned with the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2014-2017), defining the office’s gender priorities, and design instruments for its implementation in all programme areas, in line with corporate strategy.
- Develop a conceptual framework that unifies the criteria to address institutional strengthening, for all UNDP programme areas, and defines clear guidelines for action (standards, rules, procedures, values, etc.) in the implementation of institutional strengthening efforts with a focus on human rights and gender.
- Maintain the strategic alliances in multiple working areas developed by UNDP with the Government, donors and other partners, and at the same time strengthen their relationship with the direct beneficiaries. The level of UNDP collaboration with the Government is high and is estimated at about three-quarters of the UNDP programme. Equally relevant is the contribution of UNDP to the administration of the resources provided to the country by other donors. It is important that UNDP continue its efforts to mobilize resources to cope with the reduction of UNDP core funding, especially now that the country is classified as upper-middle-income.
- UNDP needs a better strategy to take advantage of its potential country networks. It is important to promote South-South cooperation in both directions, so that Dominican projects can benefit from the experiences of other countries and for UNDP to identify good practices that can be replicated in other countries.
- Continue to institutionalize the resident coordination role of the UN country team to optimize the coordination of agencies, funds and programmes, project a comprehensive vision of the UN system before the Dominican Government and facilitate dialogue with the UN country team in Haiti so that efforts continue to include the binational issue in UN programming in general and UNDP programming in particular, in order to improve the analysis of the development problems and challenges common to the two countries, in support of binational initiatives led by the Dominican Republic to address the Haiti challenge.
- Define the main national development gaps to identify innovative mechanisms to address them.
- Continue to optimize the organizational and functional structure of the country office to provide a qualitative response to new corporate challenges facing UNDP and the Dominican Republic as an upper middle-income country, to think as One United Nations and become its technical and operational expression in implementing the paradigm of SHD.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Ecuador is a middle income country, unique for its cultural, geographical and biological diversity. Its human development index score has improved between 1996 and 2005, yet income inequality across regions and ethnic groups still constitutes a challenge. It has faced deep economic crisis as well as high levels of political instability and institutional fragility. Nature conservation in the Amazon and the Galapagos archipelago, two of the major global biodiversity reserves, are an important political challenge and a national priority.

UNDP support has covered a variety of issues related to poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and democratic governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2000 to 2008.

UNDP contributed to national capacity development and the continuity of institutional activities as Ecuador emerged from a deep economic crisis but was still experiencing high levels of political instability and institutional fragility. The image of UNDP as a reliable development partner, capable of acting in a decisive manner during times of political tension, was the result of a strategic vision appropriate to the situation as well as continuous responsiveness to change.

The ability to move strategically in different situations was evident in the plurality of roles played by the organization. It acted as an advisor to decision makers and planners, mediated conflicts that threatened democratic governance, facilitated institutional processes though technical assistance and administrative services, and mobilized resources for national projects.

The greatest effectiveness was achieved in creating synergies between different actors, even when this did not result in a large budget. The restoration of the Supreme Court of Justice, for example, was widely recognized as an example of how UNDP and the United Nations can best use their neutrality to mediate among conflicting institutions, helping the country avoid a constitutional crisis and preserve the rule of law.

UNDP administrative services contributed to the continuity of government programmes during times of instability, but in some cases, the organization engaged in projects that fell out of its direct area of competence. Where it ended up substituting for the role of national institutions in public administration, opportunities were lost to foster national institutional capacities. A situation of dependent relations occurred, as was the case with a tunnel project in Quito.

When this situation was avoided, national capacities were developed. For example, UNDP supported the Ministry of Education with the sensitive negotiation of incentives and the design of a disbursement system for teacher retirements that freed resources for new hiring for the Basic Education for All programme.

The strengthening of institutional capacities for systematic poverty monitoring and development planning involved devising a methodology now used as the basis for national and local diagnostic and planning efforts. Both national and local Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports provided detailed socioeconomic data broken down by gender and ethnicity, showing attention to issues of diversity and gender equality, and providing a good basis for targeted policies and programmes. Two MDG reports exclusively focused on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian people.

While UNDP interventions have been relevant to national challenges, there is need for more objective
criteria in selecting thematic and territorial areas of focus. Support to the city of Guayaquil to develop local capacity for urban development management was a good practice. Yet overall, the 2006 report on development cooperation in Ecuador, published by the Ecuadorian Institute for International Cooperation, highlights a gap between the poverty map and the map of development cooperation in the country. The evaluation did not find evidence of a rational strategy determining UNDP programme implementation priorities; these have been determined by the capacity of national and local actors to formulate and channel their demands and by the availability of financial resources from third parties, either the Government or bilateral donors. This may partially explain the perception within civil society that UNDP sometimes has ambivalent positions or is too focused on government issues.

A flexible approach that responds to national and local demands is desirable and consistent with the principle of national ownership. Many social groups and some local governments may need specific support to transform their needs into formal demands and to channel them appropriately, however. A systematic effort to reach these more vulnerable actors is necessary to contribute to reducing socio-economic disparities across the country.

The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation limited strategic management as well as institutional learning and accountability. This led to project implementation where quality was uneven and dependent on the parameters of the executing agency or the personal capability of the project coordinator, with no relation to UNDP project management quality standards. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation also undercut the potential to inform public debate on the basis of UNDP experiences on the ground, which was a key feature of the corporate strategy to serve as an international knowledge network and knowledge broker.

A structural constraint for UNDP in Ecuador has been the lack of core resources and, consequently, the need to follow the supply of funds from local, national and international actors. Among the key challenges ahead will be the need to strike a better balance. It will be critical to implement new resource mobilization strategies in areas of UNDP competence and value added that are closely linked to long-term national development objectives and policies.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should be responsive to the government understanding of development challenges, putting greater emphasis on human development as a process of social change that extends beyond the MDG agenda.
- UNDP should adopt objective criteria for selecting territorial areas of intervention while responding to the need for enhanced efficiency of implementation and coordination on the ground with local, national and international actors.
- UNDP should clearly align its projects and programmes to medium and long-term national development objectives and policies, and should avoid abrupt interruption of support initiatives, particularly in the areas of human rights, fiscal transparency and local democratic governance.
- While continuing to act as a development broker, UNDP should diversify its interlocutors in order to choose the best partners for interventions. Work on the MDGs, and poverty reduction in general, should be done in closer partnership with the Ministry of Welfare and other relevant actors of the state and civil society, including the private sector, at the national and local level.
- UNDP needs to strengthen its capacity to manage for development results, including an effective monitoring and evaluation system. The search for greater focus, better internal communication and synergy, optimization of resources, and effective partnerships must be rationally planned. There is need for a set of indicators that enable quantitative and qualitative monitoring of UNDP work and progress towards expected outcomes.
- Whenever development support services are provided, they should be framed in a clear cooperation and exit strategy to avoid substituting the role of national institutions and creating dependent relationships that do not contribute to national capacity development. Along this line of thinking, new types of services might have to be envisioned and negotiated in close consultation with the Government of Ecuador.

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El Salvador in recent years has slowly advanced its human development, constrained by the persistence of inequality, poverty and territorial imbalances. It struggles with a deep and growing problem of violence and crime, and extreme environmental vulnerability as evidenced by several natural disasters. It has remained a highly centralized state, local government is weak and there has been sustained political polarization. Nevertheless, the completion of three peaceful electoral processes points to a consolidation of democracy.

UNDP programmes have spanned support for governance, poverty reduction, the environment, risk management and natural disasters, and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

UNDP made a number of contributions to sociopolitical development. Substantive contributions through governance support have been widely recognized by national actors, and include the creation of spaces for political dialogue on key issues such as political and electoral reform, taxation, economic and social policies, security and local development. UNDP contributed significantly to a better understanding of citizen security as a factor of development. The creation of the Economic and Social Council marked a milestone as the first space for permanent institutional dialogue.

Tangible contributions to policies for poverty reduction and, to a lesser extent, migration, built on knowledge products advocating human development. But implementation has been constrained by the lack of sustained support for building new capacities. UNDP advanced the incorporation of gender perspectives in its work, although the degree varied from substantial to cases where there was little concrete analysis of the drivers of gender equality and strategies to overcome them.

The environment portfolio contributed to climate change mitigation and the reduction of ozone-depleting substances, and to a lesser degree, to progress on biodiversity, water quality and the integrated management of ecosystems. Interventions were aimed mainly at strengthening the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Challenges included excessive dependence on the resources of the Global Environment Facility, the need to promote sustainable development based on territorial planning, and the need to integrate environmental issues across UNDP programmes.

Contributions varied in the arenas of risk management and natural disasters. Emergency assistance interventions were timely and highly responsive. But effectiveness in recovery and rehabilitation processes was uncertain. In disaster management planning, UNDP has been relatively effective, but with limited sustainability.

On HIV/AIDS, UNDP backed an integrated and multisector response, helped position the issue as a national priority, and promoted respect for the rights of people with HIV. National capacities were strengthened in the central Government and civil society.
UNDP is appreciated for impartiality; the consistency and robustness of its analyses; the technical skills of its staff; and the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of its fund management procedures. Several factors have unfavourably affected its contributions, however. Levels of direct support to civil society have been insufficient, while a focus on the executive branch has limited connections with the legislative and other levels of government.

UNDP integrated South-South cooperation in different programme components, but despite its enormous potential, did not properly manage knowledge generated. In general, while knowledge produced by UNDP is high in quality, it tended to stay in small, mostly elite circles. Knowledge management faces many weaknesses and gaps. Systematizing experiences was satisfactory in the area of governance, but deficient in local development programmes, and varied in the environmental portfolio.

Important weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems prevented UNDP from obtaining evidence on the real impact of interventions, objectively demonstrating their effectiveness and coverage of the needs of vulnerable populations, and pursuing institutional learning.

Continued reductions in core and bilateral funds and the gradual increase in co-financing by the Government merits deep reflection on the implications of this new equilibrium and the exploration of new modalities of financing. A key issue is that specialized technical staff members, who generated much added value, were funded with project funds. This puts at risk the continuity of a substantive technical contribution. Technical staff also faced difficult choices between operational work burdens and time-consuming requirements for strategic policy analysis and interaction with key actors.

The strategic relevance of UNDP was high in most areas. It focused on national priorities and responded to emerging demands without losing focus and programmatic coherence. However, after the 2009 change of Government ushered in a search for a model of economic and political life, UNDP, given its comparative advantages, had opportunities that were not sufficiently exploited. It faces challenges in developing new modalities of support aligned with new public management priorities, including those related to national leadership, institutional support in the medium term, engagement with actors at all levels, and more comprehensive management of the environment and natural risks.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Perform an organizational/institutional diagnosis that includes a process of reflection and a strategic debate on key issues of internal management and external positioning.
- Prioritize progress towards development of a strategy for long-term national capacity-building in accordance with UNDP guidelines.
- Solve deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation system.
- Promote a greater institutional approach with the Vice Ministry of Development Cooperation; contribute to local development, including in terms of political dialogue around decentralization; incorporate current and potential State compacts (fiscal, security, etc.) in advocacy; and strengthen institutions linked to gender equality.
- Optimize, consolidate and advance achievements in terms of South-South cooperation.
- Formulate, together with the other UN agencies, basic standards for interagency programmes on key issues such as planning, monitoring and evaluation, visibility, communication and coordination with counterparts.
- Prioritize mainstreaming of gender, environment and local development.
- Expand the use of existing knowledge and improve knowledge management through steps including a knowledge management strategy and greater capacity in the knowledge management unit.
- In work on poverty reduction, continue to support the application of human development approaches
- Consolidate and expand governance results, including by prioritizing capacity-building for civil society, establishing more institutionalized relationships with various national actors, increasing the participation of central government agencies in local initiatives, and strengthening support on justice and security.
- Build synergies between various environmental issues and between different work areas of UNDP, considering sustainable development and risk management holistically.
- Continue assistance to overcome the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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From the 1960s to the mid-1990s, Guatemala was devastated by an armed conflict between leftist guerrilla forces and militarized governments, whose main victims were indigenous people. A peace process was finally concluded at the end of 1996. While the country is now classified as middle income, over half the population lives in poverty. The peace process addressed a wide range of issues, including poverty and inequality, yet much remains to be done to achieve its goals. Various commitments are behind schedule.

UNDP has provided programmes related to governance, crisis prevention and recovery, poverty reduction, and energy and the environment. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2008.

UNDP has made substantial contributions to human development in Guatemala, but its strategy has not been sufficiently cogent to avoid a dispersion of activities. Strong positioning resulting from its peace-building role in the 1990s is increasingly challenged by emerging development issues.

Guatemala has been one of the not-so-frequent cases in which the United Nations closely combined the peacebuilding mandate of the General Assembly with post-conflict development. The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) supported peacebuilding efforts aimed at implementing the peace agreements and healing the wounds of three decades of internal armed conflict and human rights violations.

Along with MINUGUA, UNDP provided ample technical assistance and project management services related to many aspects of the peace process. This was appreciated by both the Guatemalan authorities and donors, who recognized UNDP as a neutral agency, broker, facilitator and promoter of dialogue on sensitive issues and between opposite groups. It gained substantial reputation, visibility and credibility.

UNDP has continued to generate considerable value in the areas of governance and crisis prevention and recovery. One of its most notable achievements was in supporting survivors of armed conflict, including through psychosocial assistance, anthropological forensic investigations, and political and technical conditions for establishing historical clarity and ensuring justice. UNDP also aided the creation of strategic plans and relevant institutions to address the agrarian conflict, helping to establish the Registry of Cadastral Information and the Secretariat of Agricultural Affairs. Yet ensuring legal recognition of property rights, especially for rural and indigenous peoples, is still a challenge.

UNDP’s record was not as strong on poverty reduction, energy and the environment. The outbreak of the global economic crisis has rendered these areas critically important, which may require a revision of past priorities. While the organization has had little experience in Guatemala in promoting economic-productive programmes for poverty reduction, it does offer strong analytical capacity and experience in the social sectors. It was relatively successful in supporting the implementation of social programmes, but less so in helping to shape related policies and providing high-level advisory support to decision makers. This was the case with cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education, which primarily focused on extending the coverage of primary schools and basic sanitation services,
including in areas with high concentrations of indigenous people. Environmental programmes were driven by external funding, mainly from the Global Environment Facility, and had limited visibility.

Efforts to introduce strategic planning have fallen short in terms of orienting and improving programmes. This is partly due to the complexities of the political and socioeconomic context of Guatemala, and partly attributable to a number of systemic and organizational factors within UNDP. Guatemala contends with deep divisions reflected in a shifting political party spectrum, and high variability in policies and directions within and between governments. Overall tax collection has traditionally been very low, and the legal framework for public administration is complicated, impairing effective government action.

On UNDP’s side, the strong dependence on external resources provided incentives to respond to shifting external demands for its services, which were not always in accordance with its substantive mandate. In responding to Government requirements, the organization has not always balanced short-term requests and long-term development goals, nor consistently contributed to longer term capacity building in national institutions. Perceived as an institution in permanent change, UNDP has also undergone regular shifts in senior management and priorities. In the second programming cycle evaluated, a portfolio of activities emerged characterized by smaller projects of shorter duration across a broader spectrum of areas, mostly without a defined exit strategy.

The effectiveness of international cooperation and UNDP in terms of the development and security agenda of the peace agreements was moderate; 12 years after they were signed, a sobering recognition of limited advances in attaining their objectives prevailed. UNDP, like other sources of international cooperation, has provided support in many areas, but with limited results in terms of more equitable development, particularly for indigenous peoples. Overly spread-out support in the area of security has not reversed a continuously worsening situation of violence and insecurity.

For both the development and the security agenda, there is an urgent need to better align and harmonize international development cooperation with government policies and local efforts, and to strengthen national professional coordination capacities. UNDP could support this process, at the request of the Government, to a greater extent than has been the case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• UNDP should establish priorities between and within its thematic areas and prepare a specific strategy in each thematic area, highlighting synergies.
• The two cross-cutting issues of gender and indigenous people require increased attention at the strategic level.
• UNDP should rebalance its support to the Government in favour of increased high-level advisory services to the executive, legislative and judicial powers, reducing the emphasis on programme administration services. At the same time, the focus on the regional level should be increased.
• UNDP should accompany its project management services with an insistence on an improvement in public administration capacities through stronger support for the modernization of the State.
• Although UNDP acts upon requests from the Government, development objectives should be expressed through long-term strategic plans (from six to eight years).
• Projects and programmes should be established with longer duration, larger volume and defined exit strategies.
• External shocks and multiple influences on programme decisions require a strengthening of reflection and periodic review of the strategic orientation of the UN system and UNDP during programme cycles.
• Reinforce communication and strategic leadership within and between the country office programmatic teams by strengthening integration at an intermediate management level.
• Reinforce monitoring and evaluation at UNDP while also supporting Government capacities.
• Reinforce UNDP as a neutral, transparent and professional coordinator in external development cooperation.
• Support a process of greater harmonization among UN agencies, including through a comparison of annual project portfolios already at the planning stage and acting with one voice where pertinent.
• Increase opportunities for collaboration with the private sector on corporate social responsibility.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

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Guyana has graduated from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries status and has now become a lower-middle-income country. Despite progress, it continues to face challenges of out-migration of educated people, poverty and uneven levels of human development. Other pressing needs rose from the devastating floods of 2005 and the 2006 elections. Environmental issues are of particular importance due to the country’s key role in global forestry conservation.

UNDP interventions have contributed to poverty reduction, democratic governance, environment and energy, and disaster recovery and risk reduction. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2010.

UNDP contributed to Guyana’s overall development priorities including through positive synergies among all programme areas. The main challenges entailed finding the appropriate mix of policy-oriented and community-based interventions, ensuring that useful links were forged between the two levels, and choosing the right combination of short-term initiatives so that longer-term programme outcomes could be achieved.

In poverty reduction, UNDP helped strengthen national capacities in line with the main poverty reduction strategy paper objectives, but most stakeholders still see UNDP as a source of funds for small-scale, community-based work. Efforts are now being made to shift the focus towards broader, upstream initiatives in line with corporate priorities. UNDP will need to realistically consider what it can contribute at the grass-roots level due to its limited resources and the need to focus on underlying policy and structural issues.

In democratic governance, UNDP assisted with achieving a peaceful election in 2006. It was also successful in promoting new paradigms of social inclusion, although it was very difficult to judge whether any of this work produced deeper changes in terms of breaking down ethnic tensions. So far, very little has been done in public administration reform to enhance institutional or policy frameworks related to accountability and transparency.

New initiatives to strengthen aid coordination and poverty monitoring may address these gaps to some extent.

The environment and energy thematic area has gradually expanded support for emerging priorities and needs in renewable energy, with an increasing focus on access to alternative energy sources in underserviced rural areas. Commendable progress was made in strengthening the management and protection of natural resources as well as in the economic and social empowerment of Amerindian communities in the hinterlands. UNDP could play a highly strategic role on these issues in the future.

UNDP had a prominent position in coordinating the immediate response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the 2005 floods. It helped to strengthen institutional capacities for more sustained disaster prevention and risk management, and deepened prospects for better long-term enforcement of existing standards/codes that govern coastal development and land use planning, as well as community involvement in disaster planning and response.

Support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to improved government commitment and stronger systems for tracking the country’s progress on global development indicators. UNDP also maintained consistent engagement with vulnerable groups such as Amerindians and the rural poor; this could be further
strengthened with clear action plans or strategies. Weaknesses in gender mainstreaming demonstrated the need to ensure that gender is thoroughly integrated into the future programme.

Despite a generally adequate balance between short-term responsiveness and longer-term development objective, high demands placed on the country office during 2005 and 2006 due to floods and elections did create some challenges in maintaining focus on longer term work. Continuous emphasis on partnership-building included reaching out to involve civil society and the private sector. These partnerships need to deepen, however, as do those with donors outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Efficiency and sustainability varied. Many examples of good managerial efficiencies included the strong synergies among thematic areas, the leveraging of resources, and acceptable financial disbursement rates and administrative expense ratios. But many projects had to be extended due to implementation delays.

Some small-scale investments may not have been adequate to assure lasting change. Positive examples of sustainability were mainly at the individual or organizational levels; fewer examples were found at the policy and institutional levels. On-going challenges with small-scale or ‘pilot’ economic development initiatives arose in terms of their financial or organizational viability, and their ability to produce lasting development benefits. Lessons learned from pilot initiatives were not always extracted and applied.

Programme management was strong, but with room for continued improvements in some areas. Some difficulties included weaknesses in results formulation and outcome level evaluation and reporting as well as delays in project planning, approval and implementation. There were also challenges with follow-up, monitoring and quality assurance to identify problems and take corrective action in a timely fashion. These issues were being addressed but will continue to require sustained effort.

Overall, UNDP’s comparative advantage corresponded not just to the amount of funding it provided, which was relatively modest compared to major international donors, but also the degree to which its strategic inputs in capacity development, small-scale demonstration projects and peacebuilding, as well as its flexibility and adaptability, were highly valued by partners at all levels. Its future, strategic relevance is likely to rely mainly on the quality and precision of upstream policy work as well as technical or capacity development inputs. A strategic focus on key institutional reforms could help strengthen the country’s future as an emerging middle-income country.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should continue to reorient its programming towards higher-level policy change and strategic upstream work in support of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper-II and Low Carbon Development Strategy.
- Consistent with the overall UNDP human development approach, UNDP Guyana should continue to strengthen its strategic approach to working with vulnerable groups and communities.
- UNDP should develop a detailed strategy for capacity development that is focused on deep institutional change rather than on individual training or one-off knowledge transfer.
- UNDP should improve sustainability by working with implementing partners and beneficiaries to create realistic exit strategies for projects, extract and apply lessons, and replicate project effects.
- UNDP should improve its partnership approach with non-state actors, as well as help strengthen the level of dialogue between these groups and the Government.
- UNDP should continue to facilitate strong dialogue and relationships between lead development partners including the Government and the UN system when requested and appropriate.
- UNDP should develop a strategy and action plan for fostering South-South cooperation in-country, regionally and internationally on a range of key development issues.
- UNDP should develop a strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender equality issues.
- UNDP headquarters should improve its corporate support for the Resident Representative role in Guyana.
- UNDP should continue to improve its mechanisms and systems to manage for development results.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. About two-thirds of its people live in poverty. Income is very unequally distributed, and the country suffers from high unemployment and underemployment. Following a series of authoritarian regimes, a fragile democracy was installed in 1982. Since the mid-nineties, progress has been made in transitioning to a more democratic society through establishing institutions for good governance and poverty reduction.

UNDP has provided support for programmes related to democratic governance, poverty reduction, environment and natural resources management, natural disaster response and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2004.

**UNDP IN HONDURAS**

UNDP has established high visibility in Honduras. It has been very effective in promoting ideas, especially with respect to governance, and contributed to tangible results both at the central and local levels.

For example, UNDP assisted the Ministry of Governance and Justice (Interior) in the elaboration of the programme for decentralization and local development, the outcome of which was the first clear national policy on decentralization. Instrumental policy advice aided in the formulation of the programme and in placing decentralization high on the Government’s agenda. At the municipal level, UNDP embarked on four different projects to strengthening the technical capacity of municipal governments. The programme made a significant contribution to improving fiscal and administrative management, and promoting transparency.

In poverty reduction UNDP did not appear to be as successful, for it did not use its comparative advantage as a facilitator of policy dialogue. Currently, the main drivers of poverty reduction programmes in Honduras have been the international financial institutions. UNDP contributed to these programmes as a facilitator, which was important in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process, including in broadening participation. But its role in developing crucial alternative proposals or thinking around poverty reduction was not significant. More effective advocacy and policy dialogue need to be linked with projects specifically aimed at poverty reduction.

UNDP contributed to setting up the national institution for sustainable rural development and provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture in the formulation of the National Programme for Sustainable Rural Development. However, besides the execution of numerous projects, UNDP did not use its leverage to facilitate a broad-based policy dialogue among relevant stakeholders for the reduction of poverty in rural areas.

Financial and technical assistance resulting in the setting up of the Institute of National Statistics was widely perceived as a positive and lasting outcome that has greatly facilitated the availability of quantitative data on poverty.

The Human Development Reports were extremely valuable tools for contributing to meaningful dialogues with the government as well as the civil society. Their statistics have made them a standard reference book for donors. If used strategically, Human Development Reports can be a valuable tool that puts UNDP on the map. The PRSP, for instance, used the human development index contained in the Human Development

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 1998-2003: $309.5 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 1998-2003**

<table>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 1998-2003 ($ MILLIONS)**

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<th>Environment</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Governance</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

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Report as a criterion for focusing on the poorest.

UNDP’s involvement, though limited, was quite successful in the field of environmental protection. In disaster management, UNDP was not initially equipped to deal with hurricane Mitch. But it took steps to adjust and assist the national disaster management system. Work on the identification of high-risk areas and the certification of bodies for risk management was a step in the right direction, although a full system to deal with natural catastrophes is not in place yet.

Capacity development is a long-term process and a key strategy of UNDP interventions. However, in a country like Honduras where there is dearth of capacity and a large staff turnover within the government bureaucracy after each election, capacity development should be a strategy that includes more components than just training. Capacity-building is multifaceted, involving training, advisory support, and knowledge creation and dissemination. Progress can only be measured if quantitative and qualitative measurements are explicitly incorporated in projects and programmes.

UNDP successfully mobilized funds for development, including through bilateral and multilateral organizations, and the Business Centre. The latter provided additional revenue, and at the same time assisted the Government where it lacked capacity. But its role and performance should be revised so that activities support initiatives that are linked to the development agenda of the country, and do not remain too close to businesses, private or public. Measures should be taken so that the Business Center transfers its knowledge to appropriate government agencies so that they will get well-trained and able staff.

Overall, UNDP was quite successful in Honduras. Despite the fact that Honduras is a small country, and UNDP had a very modest core budget, it was perceived as a neutral but effective partner that can provide independent technical advice to the Government and civil society. Its international reputation of impartiality has made it a trusted partner in resolving the country’s most pressing issues. It has a critical mass of personnel that delivers a high level of technical advice. Last but not least, it has demonstrated the authority and flexibility to respond rapidly and effectively to the new challenges the country faces.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The role of the Business Centre should be reviewed towards a gradual transformation from only dealing with procurement to a greater engagement with the private sector to raise resources particularly for poverty reduction.
- Concentrate on strategic actions to address poverty reduction and inequality. Prioritize market oriented and economic development alternatives. Fostering participation at the local level, albeit important, cannot supersede the goal of facilitating opportunities for pro-poor economic growth.
- Continue supporting the strengthening of democratic governance towards promoting human development. Foster local governance by giving priority to linking governance interventions with poverty reduction strategies.
- Improve technical expertise in poverty reduction and rural development, and devise a strategic approach to designing a poverty reduction strategy with the human development approach.
- An appropriate employment generation strategy needs to be developed that integrates rural development with poverty reduction.
- Enhance the linkage between governance, and poverty reduction, so that both governance and poverty reduction projects are implemented under a common strategy.
- Mainstream gender considerations into all programmes and projects. Assess the implications of any planned action for men and women, integrating women’s and men’s concerns in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its programmes, and in advocacy, knowledge management, and policy dialogue.
- Reduce standalone projects and strive to organize the work within the concept of development outcomes.
- Enhance skill formation and capacity. Project document design should give greater attention to monitoring and evaluation of capacity building.
- Enhance monitoring and evaluation capacities.
- Integrate a broader spectrum of civil society groups and NGOs in the participatory mechanisms UNDP helped to put in place through different government interventions.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Despite critical challenges in stimulating investment and growth, overcoming fiscal constraints and managing the debt overhang, Jamaica has achieved a medium level of human development. It is on track in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, and has reached near universal enrolment in primary education. A number of concerns come from high rates of crime and violence, however. The country is also vulnerable to natural disasters.

UNDP has made contributions in the areas of improved governance, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, and environmental sustainability and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2004.

UNDP has supported national development results in Jamaica in a number of ways, such as through a significant contribution to the Local Government Reform programme, aimed at organizing grass-roots mechanisms to develop people’s initiatives and secure their participation in national development. Under the Parish Infrastructure Development Programme, an approach termed “community engineering” was devised, based on best practices in local government. Pilot projects funded by UNDP established community structures to engage with relevant agencies involved in project implementation, and initiated and developed mechanisms for project identification, preparation and implementation in communities throughout Jamaica. The Local Initiative Facility for the Urban Environment also helped develop community participation, and established partnerships and resource mobilization for local initiatives.

Towards bolstering the public sector, UNDP focused on the capacities of the Office of Utilities Regulation, helping it to become more efficient in carrying out its responsibility as the national regulatory body for water service providers. An increase staff capacity was suggested by the demand for staff to provide training to similar organizations in the Caribbean region. Support for an information technology platform led to improved capacity to deliver information to the public, as required by the newly promulgated Access to Information Act.

The United Nations Department of Political Affairs and UNDP responded to the Government’s request for support to the electoral reform process, with the Electoral Advisory Committee engaging with UNDP to gain a “seal of approval” for electoral arrangements. The organization also contributed to strengthening the Office of the Political Ombudsman so it could effectively monitor elections and speedily resolve problems that arose.

Increased public debate on sustainable human development and human rights issues occurred through public awareness initiatives and policy dialogue. In 2000, Jamaica’s first Human Development Report proved influential among policy makers, although it was unclear how much it contributed to broader public debate.

The recently launched Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance Initiative is a major attempt by UNDP to foster social harmony and cohesion that has generated great interest. But it is too early to assess results, and government commitment to the process is unclear.

UNDP played a major role in helping the Government develop the National Poverty Eradication Programme, and worked with other UN agencies and organizations in formulating comprehensive strategies
on HIV/AIDS. A Leadership for Results Training Programme has helped generate regional networks to act on the pandemic. UNDP also assisted the Government in securing funding from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS towards implementation of the National Strategic Plan.

In the area of environmental sustainability, UNDP helped Jamaica articulate national policies and clarify institutional roles. Plans and programmes for subsectors such as national forestry management, biodiversity protection, ocean and coastal zone management, early warning systems and disaster management were drawn up, and necessary legislation passed.

Despite its achievements, UNDP faces a number of key challenges in Jamaica, including an erosion of its partnership with the Government over time. This is due in part to limited resources and in part to different responses to national development priorities. Recent resource mobilization strategies and a focus on UNDP’s comparative advantage have not had desired results. The office has been handicapped by a number of internal management problems, including a 70 percent turnover in national staff due to a reprofiling process.

Some programme management and design weaknesses need to be urgently addressed. For example, developing links between upstream policies and downstream initiatives has not received sufficient attention, nor have links between the three thematic areas, namely governance, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. A results orientation is weak. Systematic monitoring and evaluation have been limited, and the capacity to learn lessons has suffered. Limited resources underscore the crucial importance of the sustainability of development interventions and the need for exit strategies.

In the context of limited resources, visibility for the work of the UN system as a whole and support for the achievement of the MDGs should receive higher priority. This can be enhanced through greater collaboration and joint programming, preferably making the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process more effective and meaningful.

The assessment of UNDP’s strategic positioning in Jamaica indicates a number of opportunities to further explore. These should be examined in cooperation with national and international development partners. Further, UNDP needs to be flexible to react quickly to changing circumstances, including evolving aid relationships.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The national Civic Dialogue process shows great potential, but runs the risk of not meeting its objectives unless follow-up activities are carefully planned. An intensive engagement with the government should be expeditiously undertaken on benefits to be derived from the dialogue process.
- Opportunities for capacity-building, international contacts and resource mobilization should be more vigorously pursued in poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, the environment and natural disaster management.
- UNDP should explore exploiting knowledge banks and innovative approaches to address priority issues in public-sector modernization and decentralization.
- Production integration on a regional basis is an area of strategic importance and could benefit from further support provided through UNDP regional programmes.
- The country programme should strengthen its focus on a number of key issues while remaining flexible enough to respond to priority government needs. UNDP needs to become more results oriented, and upgrade the knowledge of all staff in results-based management.
- UNDP should articulate a viable strategy for resource mobilization. At the same time, consideration should be given to sharpening the emphasis on coordination and strategic interventions.
- Strengthening the relationship with the Government, particularly in a period of resource scarcity, is a priority.
- Corporately, UNDP should delineate a new strategy on the nature of engagement in different categories of countries whose needs for technical cooperation may vary.
- Promoting human development aimed at easing the process of integration in the global economy is an area where UNDP should become even more proactive. UNDP should provide increased opportunities for a country to choose from a range of choices drawn from its global experience.
- 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.

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UNDP IN JAMAICA

Jamaica is a small island developing state classified as an upper middle-income country. Its many development challenges include persistent budget deficits, high external debt, declining income, increasing poverty, environmental vulnerability, political instability and high levels of violence. In response to these challenges, the country embarked on its first long-term development plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica, with a view to transforming the country from a middle-income developing country to a developed country by 2030.

UNDP programme areas have comprised poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, improved governance, environment and energy, and justice, peace and security. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2011.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2009: $15.1 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2009

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<td>Crisis prevention and recovery</td>
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<td>Fostering democratic governance</td>
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<td>Energy and environment for sustainable development</td>
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<td></td>
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PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2009 ($ MILLIONS)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Achieving the MDGs, reducing poverty</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/unspecified</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis prevention and recovery</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering democratic governance</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and environment for sustainable development</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP responded well to national priorities. Poverty reduction projects covered relevant issues of rural youth employment, support for public policy-making and assistance with the national statistical system. A project on responding to the economic crisis made a valuable contribution in enabling the Government to ease difficulties in servicing national debt repayments. The sustainability of results linked to the capacity for managing the economy, implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and formulating and monitoring social policy will depend on how well gains are maintained and enhanced by government management and fiscal resources, and the extent to which any increased funds are used for poverty reduction.

The programme in governance was substantive, particularly in responding to urgent issues in the areas of peace, security and justice, and delivered results despite limited resources. The organization was effectively positioned on human rights issues through a number of well-focused interventions, but a strategic position on gender mainstreaming was not achieved.

In environment and energy, UNDP supported capacity development and policymaking, partnership-building, awareness-raising and innovative pilot approaches. It helped Jamaica prepare for and meet a substantial set of commitments made under international agreements, and has contributed to the development of a national energy policy. Several projects contributed to improved management of integrated land, coastal zones, and water and energy resources. The programme was not cohesive, however, covering a broad spectrum of small activities. UN inter-agency collaboration was low, with the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Coordination Unit, located in Kingston, not formally made aware of UNDP activities or vice versa.

Work on disaster response and risk reduction moved forward despite severe under-resourcing, both in terms of personnel and core funding. A school roof repair programme followed damage inflicted by Hurricane Dean, and UNDP worked with national bodies to conduct damage assessments and relief work, and prepare a recovery plan. In 2008, early recovery and damage assessment work were provided following Tropical Storm Gustav.

Disaster risk reduction concepts developed by these projects were an important input into new approaches to watershed management to reduce flood damage, particularly in urban areas such as the Hope River Catchment. The disaster management portfolio was described only in terms of disaster risk reduction, however, and needs to be more fully elaborated to assist with preparedness.
Project outcomes have in large part been delivered, but in many cases, initiatives were small given the scale of issues addressed, and of a pilot, demonstration or catalytic nature. Financial constraints mean the scope to expand operations was likely to remain limited. Government resources were also very constrained. Ultimately, the results of UNDP efforts will largely depend on the extent to which approaches it has helped to develop are taken forward by other stakeholders.

This situation underscores the importance of promoting the broadest possible awareness of how UNDP has contributed. Yet despite success in establishing strategic positions in its areas of activity, UNDP did not achieve broad awareness of the full range of its capacities, potential and activities among all relevant international development partners and government agencies, reducing opportunities for complementarity and joint working.

The planning processes for developing the UNDP country programme were disproportionately large and not decisive in shaping activities. High costs in senior management and staff time were not matched by gains in programme quality or coherence. Some important areas, notably environment, energy and disaster management, featured inadequately in plans. Others that were included, such as HIV/AIDS, later disappeared during implementation. One of the main advantages of being a small player such as UNDP is the ability to respond flexibly to changing national circumstances, yet planning processes did not take account of this.

A related issue was a results framework with too many targets and indicators. Given the broad absence of baselines and the small scale of many UNDP inputs, most indicators would be extremely difficult to measure or interpret. The cost of any serious attempt to do so would be a substantial fraction of the overall programme budget.

A number of development partners noted an opportunity for UNDP to be even more responsive to national needs by adopting a strengthened role as coordinator of international support to address poverty. UNDP is well positioned within the UN system on this set of issues. Further, its relatively small financial inputs were seen as reducing the possibility of bias towards any particular approach.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish a flexible fund mechanism in the governance area. In the poverty portfolio, the Strategic Flexible Funding Facility has been invaluable in rapidly providing modest amounts of funds, which have enabled timely implementation of strategic activities, and have sometimes leveraged substantial follow-up. A similar facility for the governance area would enable it to further strengthen its development contribution, within the limited resources available to UNDP.
- Target young people through the media they use. The country office should explore the possible additional benefits of programmes using innovative approaches, such as harnessing the communication potential of texting and social networking sites, to engage young people in issues of governance and human rights.
- Raise the profile of poverty-related activities. There should be a particular focus on leading the coordination of support to Jamaica’s efforts to meet its targets for poverty-focused MDGs.
- Raise the profile of environment and energy activities. Specific measures could include establishing clear and coherent priorities for country office activities in the sector, both from its Global Environment Facility support and through collaboration with potential new international partners.
- Make strenuous attempts to raise additional funds in the disaster management area. UNDP should take all possible measures to meet the challenges of severe under-resourcing. It should develop activities that target complementarity with broader environmental initiatives, building on results already achieved and addressing a broad range of disaster management needs.
- Ensure that gender issues are systematically and fully addressed. UNDP should clarify, support and enhance the role of the gender focal point, and map out an active role in support of national efforts to address MDG 3.
- Effectively disseminate information on UNDP activities and results.
- Develop and measure a limited set of progress indicators.
- Take measures to increase efficiency, particularly of procurement and recruitment.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

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Mexico is an upper middle-income country with the world’s 11th largest economy. It met most targets of the Millennium Development Goal, yet multidimensional poverty affects over 46 percent of the population. A number of challenges relate to governance, human rights, corruption and security. Pressure on natural resources has accelerated environmental degradation.

Since 2008 UNDP has focused on poverty reduction and inequality, democratic governance, systemic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. As of 2014, programme outcomes included sustainable human development, inclusion and equality; productive economic development and competitiveness; improved capabilities for the sustainable use of resources and resilience; public and citizen safety, social cohesion and justice; transparency, accountability; citizen participation and human rights; and leadership in international cooperation for development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2008 to 2016.

UNDP has contributed to improving the impact of public policies that support poverty reduction, the environment, sustainable development and democratic governance by creating knowledge, fostering dialogue, providing skills training and implementing projects. It has also helped the three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society to strengthen their capabilities to achieve social inclusion, quality of life, and economic growth and competitiveness.

UNDP has contributed to the efforts aimed at reversing environmental degradation and maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable and equitable way by making environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy cross-cutting matters in legislative processes. It helped develop the electoral system, and supported public safety strategies focused on citizens. New public policies to prevent crime and foster social cohesion now take a rights-based approach and offer a gender perspective. As the Government’s main partner in positioning Mexico as a regional cooperation partner, UNDP backed progress in consolidating a valid international development cooperation platform.

UNDP is considered by the Mexican Government, local governments and civil society organizations to be a valuable and trustworthy ally. It is appreciated for transparency in handling public resources, its capability to access a network of experts, and impartiality. Its support has been valuable, for instance, in intervening in communal land issues and communities where the Mexican Government is not fully accepted. UNDP also offers well-acknowledged opportunities to build knowledge through the production of Human Development Reports, and to assist monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs and now of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDP has moved from macro- to micro-level policies with state governments, focusing on everyday concerns such as violence, the deterioration of social fabric, patronage and poor state capacities. Yet it has left aside fundamental topics to which it had previously made important contributions, such as gender equality, human rights, and topics related to security, transparency, corruption and impunity. UNDP has lost its leading role in gender equality, not having a gender strategy since 2012. In governance and environment, the organization did not contribute approaches, methodologies or experts to improve gender equality. UNDP also has been lagging behind in advocating a comprehensive view of development based on multidimensional poverty.

Contributions to the design and implementation of national development policies faced several challenges, including electoral cycles. The National Development Plans run every six years and do not coincide with UNDP programme cycles, thus limiting opportunities to link international commitments with the national agenda.
Further, UNDP’s collaboration with Government has decreased, due to the latter showing reduced interest and to UNDP not being proactive in promoting topics that could be part of the public agenda. High-level dialogue has been weakened by staff turnover at UNDP and in government agencies. With the 2030 Agenda opening a new window of opportunity, UNDP re-established high-level dialogue and contributed to the Government’s identification of national targets to meet the SDGs.

While UNDP’s activities are pertinent to national development priorities, project results cannot be easily evaluated against outcomes. The formulation of outcomes was very ambitious in relation to the specificity of projects. That said, the vast majority of project results were positive, with the best results from generating evidence, optimizing the use of resources by forging strategic alliances with local and national agents, and engaging communities to better understand local leadership and generate trust. There was little coordination between different areas of cooperation, however.

Project sustainability was affected by staff turnover and dependence on temporary consultants who implement permanent work. Increasing public budgetary restrictions led to cuts at national counterparts responsible for ensuring the continuity of project results, many of which, as a result, will not be replicated on a larger scale.

Efforts were made to improve capabilities in institutions involved in UNDP projects, but at risk that they be lost and, with them, the sustainability of results. Capabilities developed in the academic sector ensure long-term continuity, but there are no mechanisms through which their potential can be used once projects end.

Programme management was efficient, and resources were suitable for projects. Yet administrative procedures were rigid and costly. Accountability mechanisms and project audits put time and resource burdens on civil society groups in particular. Financial sustainability was satisfactory, despite lower government funding resulting from budgetary restrictions.

UNDP is present in places and events where other cooperation agencies have limited presence in Mexico. It has the potential to be very pertinent with certain agents, such as municipalities, where capacities in some cases are very basic. Other comparative advantages include UNDP’s strategic and issue-based approach to dialogue with partners. This varies from the approach taken by cooperation bodies such as development banks, which contribute their own ideas and modalities. Overall, the work undertaken by UNDP with the Mexican Government stands out for its sensitivity towards social, economic and environmental circumstances, and for its capacity to develop national models.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP needs to be autonomous, firm and agile in proposing alternative pathways for sustainable human development and to influence the 2030 Agenda at the highest level. It needs to strengthen its capacity for high-level policy dialogue with the Mexican Government to achieve greater impact in formulating and implementing public policies, and acting as a bridge in periods of political change.
- To remain an active partner in supporting the national development agenda, UNDP should proactively identify development challenges and prioritize its work in the next cooperation programme to include support in promoting fair and democratic elections, improving transparency and accountability and promoting good governance, where it has a clear comparative advantage. It should focus on long term projects at the national level and integrate the environmental agenda with multidimensional poverty work in order to address social and economic inclusion, promote green economy in all economic sectors and address climate change challenges.
- UNDP should move beyond procurement and consultancy projects to address human development issues, and better engage with the national public agenda, private sector, civil society and academia to formulate its priorities for the next programme cycle.
- Moving into the next programme cycle, UNDP needs to strategically position itself vis-a-vis the Government and other development partners; diversify its funding sources; and develop a resource mobilization strategy that includes other donors and the private sector, while continuing its cost sharing arrangement with the Government.

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Nicaragua, after Haiti, is the poorest country in Latin America. Since 1990, four presidential and legislative elections have been held and their results respected. But amid ongoing polarization, various surveys show the continued loss of confidence in political parties and public institutions. Poverty, lack of opportunities, weapons and the penetration of organized crime networks contribute to high levels of violence. Environmental deterioration is worrying, and the country has been affected by a variety of natural disasters that have exposed its social vulnerability.

UNDP has prioritized four lines of service: sustainable economic development and the reduction of poverty, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); democratic governance; energy and environmental sustainability; and the prevention of natural disasters. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2005.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES, 1998-2007: $140 MILLION**

**FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular resources</td>
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<td>Vertical funds</td>
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**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY PRACTICE AREA, 2004-2006 ($ MILLIONS)**

- Energy and environment: 12.4
- Fostering democratic governance: 19.7
- Achieving the MDGs and reducing poverty: 32.7

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP has played diverse roles within the framework of its mandate. It has facilitated dialogue processes between different social actors and politicians, as well as among international cooperation entities. It advocated and advised on public policies and provided fund management services for development projects. Important and innovative efforts went into strengthening institutions in three of the four branches of State, and building capacities to advance sustainable human development.

In the area of democratic governance, support focused on strengthening the rule of law, the modernization of public administration and citizen participation. Work with the legislature and political parties aimed at the proper functioning of the National Assembly and the modernization of political parties as vital elements for good democratic governance. Other accomplishments entailed engaging with civil society to negotiate and present demands to state institutions.

UNDP assisted with preparations for decentralization and the strengthening of a strategy for municipalities. These issues need more momentum and attention, however. It may be important to have a coordination process involving a variety of organization to address local governance issues and the MDGs.

UNDP helped put the complex and critical reality of the Atlantic Coast region on the national agenda, building on its neutrality, respect for diverse social actors and politicians, concentration on substantive issues, and efficiency and transparency. Work in this area is novel and strategic, and might be reproduced in other parts of Latin America where territories have little state presence, low rates of human development, rich biodiversity and resources, and a variety of traditional and new actors.

In the area of poverty reduction and MDG advancement, UNDP aided the generation of statistics to underpin effective public policies aimed at human development, including through disaggregation by gender, locality and sector. The organization helped bolster the national statistics institute and validate its role.

Other poverty reduction programmes sought to attract foreign direct investment, strengthen local production and invest in infrastructure. Pro-Nicaragua, the investment promotion agency of Nicaragua, was assisted with attracting a significant volume of external investment that can generate jobs. The Productive Transformation Programme attempted to support small local producers to access markets, but results were less positive. This was due to programme design deficiencies, including a lack of strong connection with local development processes.
Towards contributing to gender equality and the empowerment of women, UNDP participated in a regional project, “Economic Agenda for women”. But a gender perspective was not consistently integrated in all interventions.

Work on the environment focused on the protection of biodiversity, climate change and desertification. Technical capabilities were built to bring together environmental policy with development plans that prioritize improvements in the living conditions of the poorest. Energy programmes saw increased energy coverage in rural areas through the use of renewable energy.

In preventing natural disasters, UNDP backed a crucial dialogue that led to the adoption of law 337, which provides for the decentralization of disaster prevention efforts and risk reduction. The law defines responsibilities and tasks for line ministries as well as the main municipalities.

Both the government and international cooperation actors were looking for new modalities of work that produce better development results. Some proposals moved away from the traditional practice of project financing, privileging sectoral and budgetary support. It is still early to appreciate results or significant changes in development conditions, but assistance provided by UNDP to the process of alignment and harmonization was recognized and valued.

UNDP programmes were highly relevant, but variable in their effectiveness. They have been efficiently managed. In some situations, they have not generated enough national capacities to be continued or to offer appropriate benefits once the support is finished UNDP should seek to improve sustainability and have clearly defined exit strategies. Institutional risks that should be considered include those related to the lack of a financing strategy with a clear identification of value added in terms of development assistance.

UNDP should maintain its position as a strategic ally for the development of Nicaragua, tightening its relationship with the powers of the State, based on a firm position in favour of the poorest and the strengthening of democratic governance. It should continue exercising its role as a facilitator and dialogue coordinator among diverse actors of international cooperation, the Government and civil society, putting at the centre of the discussions the conditions of life and the future of the most excluded groups.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP must continue to preserve the normative framework of the United Nations system and the commitment to promote sustainable human development.
- UNDP should strengthen its planning capacity, and monitoring and evaluation. Evaluations should be used to provide more coherence to interventions, and synergies should be explored among thematic areas.
- Efforts should be made to reduce high turnover of staff, balance substantive tasks and administration of services, and align the internal capabilities of the office with support needs identified by national counterparts.
- UNDP should play a more active role in the coordination of United Nations agencies, and promote an open dialogue with national actors on the implications of new financing modalities.
- UNDP should support decentralization for local development, including in terms of fiscal transfers to municipalities and in the strengthening of municipal administrations.
- UNDP ensure that all programmes include gender equity in all phases of design, execution and evaluation.
- UNDP should continue to raise awareness about the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
- UNDP technical assistance could be improved to help generate greater capacities at the national and local levels, and facilitate compliance with international agreements.
- In disaster prevention, UNDP needs to work on risk management in an intersectoral manner. It can help structure indicators to measure the human development impact and repercussions of disasters.
- Given positive results, UNDP needs to continue its presence and interventions at the local level, particularly on the Atlantic Coast, including through more coordination with other actors of international cooperation.
- UNDP could strengthen advocacy for public policies that promote development within the framework of national government priorities.

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Following the end of a 35-year dictatorship in 1989, Paraguay launched a series of reforms that laid the foundation for the modernization of the country. Major development challenges of the last decade include a high level of socioeconomic inequality and weak institutions. Economic growth with little capacity to create jobs has limited efforts to reduce poverty.

UNDP has provided assistance related to democratic governance and the modernization of the State, poverty reduction and sustainable human development, and environmental management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

UNDP has been repositioned in the last decade in Paraguay. A strategic shift towards advisory services, technical assistance, facilitation of dialogue and provision of information responded to government demands and human development needs. A stronger analytical capacity has helped UNDP enrich the development debate in the country during a critical time of change.

UNDP’s significant role in poverty reduction included making conceptual and methodological contributions to the Social Safety Net and programmes that emerged with it, as well as to the National Food Assistance Programme. A focus on poor and marginalized people is increasing with a strategic move towards substantive direct execution projects and the strengthening of decentralized actions. Pilot projects have been launched to promote the productive development of rural groups in the framework of poverty reduction, for example, strengthening cooperation with poor populations.

A state modernization programme that was more than 90 percent financed by the Government encompassed a series of important initiatives. These included a white paper on institutional reform, the creation of the Office of Human Development, and support for six governors in strategic management. Assistance to presidential transitions in 2003 and 2007 shaped national plans and strategies, as well as sectoral targets for some key ministries. Paraguay has established baseline indicators on democratic governance, and in the complex sector of water and sanitation, has established unified data so that strategies build on common statistics.

The inclusion of civil society organizations and subnational governments seeking to strengthen governance structures and practices from the grass-roots received early encouragement from UNDP. Representatives of civil society organizations participated in the development and implementation of UNDP plans and some projects in the areas of the environment, emergency response, the water sector and so on. But a programme to strengthen civil society per se was not defined.

Gender issues have gained momentum since 2007, with activities related to combating domestic violence and strengthening the Gender Unit within the Directorate of Human Rights of the Supreme Court. Youth issues were addressed through specific projects, such as on youth, employment and migration, which sought to expand capabilities and opportunities for poor and vulnerable youth, including indigenous youth.

Paraguay’s two United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks helped create a common vision of United Nations support to the country. Although systematic joint monitoring is a pending issue, a culture of regular coordination has produced high-impact joint projects and reduced duplication. UNDP and UNICEF jointly established the Investing in People programme,
for example, which was joined by UNFPA in 2005. In less than a year, the programme firmly established the concept of social expenditure for regular application in budgetary analyses, the costing of social goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and analysis of social investments. The programme has received several international awards and now provides technical assistance to other countries.

While UNDP’s interventions as a whole have responded to national priorities, support overall was only modestly effective. This was due in part to the concentration of support for entities within the executive branch, which is mostly characterized by institutional weakness and limited policy stability. Contributions to capacity development tended to erode. UNDP interventions lacked broader institutional anchoring negotiated with the Government as well as adequate monitoring and evaluation systems. Responsiveness to requests from the executive branch was high. Yet the consistency of responses was affected by changes in the legislative and executive branches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that UNDP formulate a national strategic document that concisely determines: the basic guidelines that will ensure the greatest leveraging of scarce UNDP resources in terms of human development results; the different lines that UNDP carries out (topical and cross-sectional areas, research and dissemination of knowledge, project management, activities not related to projects) and those implemented by mandate from headquarters (e.g., administration for other agencies) with cost implications; and the allocation of resources (staff, time, funds) between the defined lines, each with its own funding plan, updated periodically.

- In the three main areas of intervention, internal brief documents should be drawn up that define the strategy by topical area, with sufficient specificity to facilitate transparent selection of activities to support.

- Greater precision in defining activities targeting priority groups is needed, indicating how to reach them.

- The strategic shift towards more 'substantive' activities presents UNDP with the challenge of developing a working format that allows it to carry out a longer term programme, thinking of new forms of shared implementation. UNDP is encouraged to explore modalities with national stakeholders and other United Nations agencies. Longer-term financing should be sought via different channels, including to maintain the space created and further extend the debate on poverty, inequality and human rights.

- Improving social programmes requires strengthening initiatives in more than just the public sector. UNDP could explore possibilities for further alliances with networks including NGOs, businesses and other stakeholders, particularly to target disadvantaged groups and young people, with due regard for gender equity.

- Paraguay is exposed to the economic and ecological shifts and changes of neighbouring countries. The UNDP regional network (Southern Cone) and other actors from neighbouring countries could engage in reflection to identify joint projects with direct relevance for the improvement of human development in Paraguay.

- UNDP should mobilize external support or corporate networks to strengthen the continuous monitoring of finances, administration and substantive activities. Structured monitoring and evaluation should become a management tool. With regard to institutions and government projects, it is recommended that more attention be paid to M&E in order to support proper tools for more efficient public management.

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Peru has created institutional structures and started a long-range decentralization of political authority in order to strengthen democratic governance. In the economic sphere, the country has shown one of the greatest growth rates in Latin America, attained a significant reduction in poverty, and now belongs to the category of upper-middle-income countries. Nonetheless, public dissatisfaction with the political parties and public authorities has reached high levels. Social and environmental conflicts have been on the increase.

UNDP programmes covered democratic governance, poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), crisis prevention and recovery, and the environment and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2009.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP’s primary focus in Peru has been assisting with democratic governance. It has been an important ally of the State, reflected in the fact that a large share of programme resources derive from government resources.

Programmes tackled various aspects of democratic governance. In the area of human rights, several national initiatives were established and fortified with UNDP support, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Defensoría del Pueblo (Ombudsman) and the Special Congressional Disability Commission. Through the reform of the judicial system, improvements have been remarkable, but overall reform was not achieved, hindered by structural inertia and resistance. Support to the Congress brought about some infrastructural improvements, but had little effect on the performance of parliamentary functions.

As an interim measure, UNDP was a valuable ally in assisting with the administration of public resources, guaranteeing transparency, although sometimes with a limited substantive contribution. This role began to diminish with a push for the State to assume management responsibilities, such as through new legislation for public employment and the creation of an authority responsible for civil service careers over the longer term.

In supporting decentralization, UNDP made a pertinent change in its initial support strategy by establishing offices in several regions to directly support respective governments. Decentralization is still at an early stage, however, and requires the long-term creation of skills. At the regional and municipal levels, large unfulfilled needs persist in public administration.

UNDP support to poverty reduction and the MDGs assisted the formulation of social policies and helped focus resources through use of the Human Development Index. The strategic alliance with the Round Table (Mesa de Concertación) to combat poverty, involving hundreds of groups throughout the country, increased awareness and established cooperation mechanisms. The publication of MDG reports helped guide public policies and budgetary allocations. UNDP’s promotion of access to microcredit, especially for women, had a limited effect, however, in contrast to the ample and already well-established microcredit industry in the country.

Crisis prevention and recovery programmes covered natural disaster prevention, emergency aid and support to mechanisms to cope with social conflicts. UNDP made major contributions to analysing risk and continuously supported the National Civil Defence Institute. As the national response to the 2007 earthquake showed, implementation of preventive measures and the capac-
ity to respond to emergencies were still at an early stage. The same applied to social conflict management. Despite support for the National Agreement between the main political parties and civil forces, the Agreement is not a budgetary unit, which limited its influence.

The environment and energy portfolio was small in scope. Support for the establishment of the new Ministry of the Environment was much appreciated, although it took the form of one-off interventions, and the Ministry still needs investment in its capabilities. Small environmental conservation projects helped develop river-basin management models and sustainable, community-based, natural-resource management approaches.

By reducing the size of its programme portfolio, UNDP made progress in lowering the risk of dispersion of the programme, although it still has to formulate specific guidelines for each thematic area. Across-the-board activities and themes not necessarily in the form of projects—such as advocacy, interaction with partners, generation and dissemination of important analysis and consultation for the MDGs, and inter-agency cooperation—have enhanced the organization’s image and prestige. These activities stand to gain in importance in an emergent country such as Peru, where national capacities are increasing and the relative importance of external project support is declining.

UNDP has provided important support to the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation, from its inception in 2002. An active role in promoting South-South cooperation draws resources offered by the Perez Guerrero Fiduciary Fund, created by the United Nations for this objective.

The UNDP Peru programme is currently in transition from the days when it primarily supported the administration of public resources. While not having abundant resources to contribute, UNDP can still add value to the human development of the country. Programming elements that best respond to present and future challenges include the reformulated strategy to support decentralization, with a presence in the regions, and the ability to generate knowledge and standards for human development by applying the Human Development Index. Also important will be UNDP’s ability to mobilize its regional and global cooperation network, advocate for critical concerns such as climate change and the settlement of social conflicts, and further strengthen national coordination of international cooperation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- UNDP should elaborate specific strategic guidelines in each thematic area in the next Country Programme Document. This will help better define the contents of and weight between programmatic areas, as well as links with non-project activities, and enhance selectivity to further focus on the excluded population. Clearer guidelines for strengthening the focus on gender equity are also to be provided across the thematic areas.
- In the area of democratic governance, the ‘seed project’ model has been useful to start up new State institutions or parliamentary commissions. UNDP should nonetheless privilege involvement in substantive formulation and ensure that there is clear institutional anchoring, and an explicit plan to transfer knowledge and experience.
- The rationalization of the legal system within and between the three levels of public administration should be supported to improve its capacity to respond to human development challenges and achievement of the MDGs.
- In crisis prevention and recovery, a more systemic approach should be adopted and greater continuity in the learning process encouraged so that knowledge can be accumulated and systematized.
- In the area of social conflict management, the base of support and intervention should be broadened and more clearly linked with initiatives on the environment and poverty.
- UNDP should identify with better precision the levels, fields and specific MDGs it should promote concretely.
- UNDP should further reduce its involvement in administrative support to central State entities, giving more attention to strengthening the capacities of regional and municipal governments.
- UNDP should systematize lessons learned and disseminate them among its partners.
- Further diversification of partnerships is recommended, not only territorially (more activities out of the capital), but also with respect to sectors (civil society, private sector, academia, etc.) and global partners.
- In order to gain a broader and more accurate recognition of its commitment to human development, the overall communication strategy should be fine-tuned.

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Uruguay, a high-income country, has an advanced social protection system and a solid tradition of civic and political engagement. It enjoys the lowest rates of poverty and inequality in its region, but pockets of poverty remain, including among young people and in households with children under six.

UNDP has provided support on inclusive growth, diversification and innovation; environment and risk reduction; fighting poverty and inequality; and strengthening local and national democratic governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2014.

**TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2014: $142.7 MILLION**

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

UNDP’s country programme was considered an efficient mechanism to support national development goals, despite some gaps, notably limited capacity in work on inclusive growth and diversification. It showed flexibility and adaptability through an ongoing process of institutional and programmatic reform, and applied appropriate work strategies focused on technical assistance, democratic dialogue, advocacy and knowledge. Effectiveness and performance were strong, in some cases exceeding expectations. The human development framework, the main UNDP asset, added value to public debate on the performance of social and environmental policies.

With UNDP support, Uruguay has mainstreamed environmental issues with considerable results. Consensus has been reached around legal frameworks and policy agreements to support effective environmental management, the sustainability of protected areas, and the link between biodiversity conservation and local development. Ten protected areas were added to the national system and three management plans adopted. Reform of the energy matrix was achieved earlier than expected.

Within the UNDP programme on inclusive growth and diversification, priority was given to the former, particularly through microfinance and local development programmes. The latter is a critical area of work, however, since volatility and unsustainable economic growth have been recurrent features in Uruguay’s development.

The Cooperation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development or ART programme successfully coordinated local, subnational and national stakeholders to prepare economic development strategies in line with the national development strategy. It also helped bring forward highly relevant issues for social policy, like multidimensional poverty analysis.

UNDP coordinated diverse agencies on Millennium Development Goal issues. It assisted the 2011 national dialogue on health care, which influenced the design of the National Health-Care System. Support to the Youth Employment Act and an employment roundtable helped reduce the share of private sector employees without social security coverage from over 41 percent in 2006 to 27 percent in 2013.

Other assistance aided in mainstreaming a human rights approach into public policy, and helped promote the demands of vulnerable groups, such as through multistakeholder dialogues on human rights, national defence, mega-mining and water access. National partners committed to a new programme for prisoner education and reintegration into employment, and the reform of the prison system has deepened. Systematic contributions to gender equality included the mainstreaming of equal opportunities and joint responsibility policies within public and private companies. Technical assistance enabled InMujeres, part of the Ministry of Social
Development, to train a mainstreaming team that now supports strategic national gender planning.

Sustainability of programmes overall was high, due to an early and relevant mainstreaming and legislative process, capacity-building and ownership of results, without creating financial dependence. With UNDP support, significant laws have been passed, such as the Political Decentralization and Citizen Participation Law. National resources have been leveraged, and a large number of technical experts brought into different projects have since been incorporated into public service. The visibility of UNDP outcomes was sometimes limited, however, particularly in inland Uruguay.

UNDP helped to mobilize resources from the Government and other actors in the multilateral aid system. It was acknowledged as a sound project manager, and its role as fund manager—such as for funds from loan agreements with international financial institutions—has been praised. There was ongoing internal and external debate about the relevance of the fund management role in the future, however, given the country’s higher income status and sound national institutions.

UNDP has coordinated different stakeholders to develop joint initiatives. Specific South-South cooperation initiatives took place but were only partially integrated into programmes. UNDP and other United Nations agencies still need to provide theoretical and practical definitions of South-South cooperation appropriate to a middle- to high-income country.

Additional efforts should be made to develop and strengthen knowledge management capacity, including to ensure that it is appropriately mainstreamed and sustained over the next programmatic cycle. A more effective monitoring and evaluation system would provide more evidence-based, timely information on results.

Given the Uruguayan context, UNDP could play an active role as a think tank to inform national debate on productive development and its links with human development, while at the same time drawing from Uruguay’s experience to inform international debate. In coordination with other stakeholders and agencies, UNDP could also lead development-related research and promote debate on strategies to address challenges in different areas of development and the environment. These might include diversification of the primary base, the role of the state and the private sector, science and technology, fiscal and production policy, and productive and inclusive development.

Given its broad mandate, UNDP is probably the most active agency working on integrated development issues, which positions it well as a convener and coordinator for a broad variety of topics. With a proven capacity to move issues onto the agenda, UNDP should continue to promote a holistic development vision.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Strengthen capacity for risk management and responding to change, identifying opportunities in the new administration and programme cycle. In the current context, UNDP needs to be prepared for changes that could have an impact on priorities: diversifying funding sources; promoting joint resource mobilization; and renewing and diversifying strategic partnerships.
- Build on some of the outstanding achievements of UNDP in areas such as energy, human rights and gender, introducing a localized and/or decentralized approach for priority issues, ensuring innovative approaches for sensitive national issues such as diversification of production.
- Improve the quality of pilot experiences, creating models of effective implementation of policies identified by the Government in its South-South cooperation strategy. This could become a cross-cutting area in the new programme cycle, and should include more opportunities for civil society engagement. Specific South-South cooperation tools should be developed in the areas considered most successful.
- Strengthen opportunities to develop gender equity strategies and gender programming and monitoring mechanisms, to ensure a more substantial contribution to these strategic goals. Opportunities should be created to address this issue through sectoral and crosscutting initiatives, for a more holistic and integrated United Nations strategy.
- Consolidate UNDP leadership in bringing key issues to the agenda and coordinating dialogue on critical and sensitive issues, to continue promoting a holistic development vision with a broad range of private and civil society stakeholders.

**ABOUT THE ICPEs**

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board.

To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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