



## Case Study Zambia

**EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT SYSTEM**

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HD	human development
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	human development report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
NHDR	national human development report
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# 1 Introduction and assessment approach<sup>1</sup>

This report on Zambia is one of six African country studies that which form part of the UNDP Evaluation Office's Assessment of the national human development reports (NHDR) process. The study was guided by a common set of objectives, assessment criteria and methodology as shown in the annexed Terms of Reference and Inception Report (Annex 1). Specifically, this assessment sought to examine the effectiveness of the Zambia NHDR process, its influence and value addition to efforts to promote human development (HD).

Section 2 of the report presents the context for the NHDR process by providing an overview of Zambia's political and socio-economic development, especially since the mid-1990s, after which the NHDR process began. This lays a framework for examining in section 3 the contents and relevance of the NHDR themes pursued so far, using existing literature and views gained from interviews. This section generally argues that the themes selected were relevant to the pressing HD issues facing Zambia.

Section 4 assesses the manner in which the NHDR process has evolved or the 'trajectory' of the NHDR process. This section analyses the selection process of NDHR themes, and how and by whom the reports have been written and controlled for quality. It then outlines the various NHDR dissemination processes followed and their effectiveness, including the partnerships developed in this process and their potential contribution to the NHDR's influence.

In section 5 the report attempts to assess the influence of the NHDRs on national policies relevant to HD and on the capacities to produce and effectively use relevant data, as well as the NHDR's influences on the intellectual and civil society milieu. The results suggest that the NHDR has been fairly influential in all these areas, although other related initiatives such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may be gaining centre stage in terms of influence and visibility, albeit with the support of the results of NHDRs. Moreover, most stakeholders suggest that there is a danger

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<sup>1</sup> The research assistance provided by Judith Kaulem and Ndabezinhle Nyoni is highly appreciated

that too much weight may be unduly placed on the NHDR influence, given that it is only one of related initiatives of the UNDP and UN family.

In this light the report then examines in section 6 the strategic positioning of the NHDR in Zambia and its potential in the future. This includes an examination of trends towards alignment with other tools such as PRSPs and MDGs, as well as the NHDR's place in donor coordination and new efforts to reintroduce national development. As this process is incipient, the report examines the potential effects of such realignments and a broadened use of the NHDR process.

The Zambia assessment then concludes with a brief outline of lessons learned, and a concluding remark.

The broad methodology followed by this report is outlined in the Global NHDR Assessment Report (Ha-Joon Chang and Carl Riskin, 2006), and summarized in annex 1. This defines the context and purpose, scope, key evaluation questions and criteria.

The Zambia NHDR in-depth assessment study was conducted through a variety of information collection methods and sources. All the four NHDRs that Zambia has produced since 1997 were reviewed for purposes of this assessment. Other key documents including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Zambia and UNDP websites were used as sources of information. Detailed reviews of all four NHDRs that Zambia has produced were studied in order to get a comprehensive idea of the nature and contents of the reports.

In addition, on-line consultations were undertaken with the UNDP country office focal person on NHDRs to gather more information on the report production process. Over 30 persons from offices in government, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, development agencies, academics and politicians were interviewed. Some of the scholars provided key information on NHDRs. The information gathered through desk research was triangulated through a field study and interviews with key stakeholders in Zambia. The field study was facilitated by a national research assistant, who also provided

logistical support, including setting up appointments and gathering and compiling information.

One critical methodological finding from field interviews, which our analyses of the evidence gathered confirms, and which needs critical consideration at least in qualifying the scope of this assessment, is that the expectations of the actual influence, let alone the impact, of the NHDR process on policy, intellectual tendencies and local capacities to advance HD may be too high. Many actors see the NHDR as “just one tool for policy support”, in an effort to address a myriad HD issues, which “all things being equal” in the present context, would take a long time to address. Given that the NDHR tool is not an “operational tool for day to day programming”, it tends to be “limited in function by design to flag a key human development issue every two years.” Indeed, the NHDR is one of a number of national HD oriented reports, of different stature, produced by the UN family (e.g. UNICEF etc.), and as such its influence can only be a “shared contribution” rather than a direct influence.

Thus the influences of NHDRs on government policy, on intellectual HD capacities and on the capacity of civil society organizations to advocate for HD policy changes were assessed. The influence on policy was measured according to a variety of indicators: the degree to which government adopts specific NHDR recommended objectives and practices, the degree to which resource allocation shifts for this occur, and government’s efforts to collect and use relevant HD data, thus widening the analytic framework and its decentralization. Incidental influences were deduced from public pronouncements of government in policy and planning documents and in public speeches concerning HD issues, and its involvement in HD debates. The degree to which government committed resources to the NDHR production process and its willingness to involve HD specialists in their own HD policy processes, as well as the government’s willingness to involve civil society activities in policy and planning processes were also taken into account. The use of NHDRs by parliamentarians and political parties was examined.

The influence on policy was also assessed by examining government’s involvement at various stages of the NHDR process, including its commitment of high level personnel to NHDR project design and review; its provision of ideas for NHDR themes and data in the

production process; and its commitments to dissemination of NHDRs and willingness to engage in specific follow-up activities arising from NHDR. However, the approach to assessing policy influence also entailed defining the constraints to the absorption of influence or application of desirable HD concepts learned. Such constraints included: government capacity to translate recommendations into concrete policy and actions; resources available to allocate to HD activities; restrictions imposed by International Financial Institutions on expenditure (such as for teachers and nurses salaries); civil society organizations' capacity constraints in the formulation of HD policy options and alternative implementation strategies; and the limited intellectual resources available to undertake research (collect data and pay top scientists).

Indicators of intellectual influences included: citations and use of NHDRs in research, conferences and public addresses; HD debates in academic and public fora; and the adoption of HD teaching curricula for new HD courses and for examinations. Training workshops on HD organized for academics, civil society and other audiences, and the commitment of resources for primary research on HD issues were also examined as measures of intellectual influence.

The NHDR influences on civil society advocacy capacities were sought from examining: efforts made to provide inputs into NHDR data and analyses; HD data advocacy activities on single or wider issues; NGO fora created to debate HD; training of NGO staff on HD through short courses and workshops; and programming NGO work around HD issues. Also examined were the degree to which civil society organizations financed HD forums, private sector thinking and strategies on HD issues, and the degree to which the media covered HD issues, as a proxy of public interest in HD.

Assessing the influence of NHDRs also entailed examining the effects of the political situation on HD policy dialogue, including whether this environment had been improved by the NHDR processes. Since the NHDR process was not considered to have had a path breaking influence on this aspect, such that NHDRs merely contributed to consolidating the democratic space for dialogue, which has been growing in Zambia for some time, and gained from this political climate, our assessment does not delve deeper into this issue. In general it

should be noted that the NHDR has added to broader political integration processes in Zambia, although we were not able to assess because of resource and time limitations, how NHDRs may be failing to contribute to averting factors that promote political dis-integration (e.g. new wealth inequalities; new political party electoral aggression, etc.).



## **2 Country context**

The Republic of Zambia is a landlocked country in southern Africa. It borders the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, Tanzania on the north-east, Malawi on the east, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to the south and Angola to the west. At independence, despite its considerable mineral wealth, Zambia faced major challenges. Domestically, there were few trained and educated Zambians capable of running the government and the economy was largely dependent on foreign expertise. Civil war in the former Portuguese colonies generated an influx of refugees and caused continuing transportation problems.

Zambia's post-independence political and economic milieus have experienced three transformations: The First Republic (1964-1972); the Second Republic (1972-1990) and the Third Republic (1990-present). Each phase has been characterized by a distinctive political ideology and preferred approach to managing the national economy.

Zambia's HD situation has remained relatively poor during the last 10 years, and has in fact deteriorated during this period. Although some of the HD indicators improved slightly, Zambia's global human development index (HDI) ranking dropped from 153<sup>rd</sup> in 2000 to 166<sup>th</sup> in 2005. This is evident in the falls in life expectancy and per capita GDP levels, (in spite of the recent upward trend in the GDP growth rate, reduced rates of HIV/AIDS infection and increases in schooling levels).

**Table 1: Context**

Capital	Lusaka
Official language	English
Indigenous languages	72+
Government	Republic
Area of land mass	752,614 km <sup>2</sup>
Area of water bodies	1% of land mass
Population	
• 2004 estimate	10,462,436
• Estimate for 2003 based on 2000 census	9,582,418
• Density	13/km <sup>2</sup>
GDP (PPP) in USD	2003 estimate
• Total	9,185 million
• Per capita	883

For instance, approximately 68 percent of Zambians live in poverty today. Per capita annual incomes are currently at about one-half the levels at independence and, at US \$395, place the country among the world's poorest nations. Social indicators continue to decline. In particular, the measurement of life expectancy at birth by the 2005 global human development report (HDR) suggests that this has fallen to 37 years, although the Central Statistics Office (CSO) estimates life expectancy to be at 50 years (interview with CSO, October 2005). Maternal mortality is at 729 per 100,000 pregnancies. The country's rate of economic growth, although currently at about 5 percent, which is now higher than the population growth rate of below 3 percent, cannot induce employment and income growth due to the widely skewed income distribution pattern. Nor can it redress the strain caused by HIV/AIDS related issues, although prevalence has declined from 19.6 percent in 1999 to 15.6 percent in 2005. Effects such as rising medical costs and the decline in worker productivity have become critical concerns.

The historical, political and socio-economic situation of Zambia has provided fertile ground for promoting HD over the last two decades, in spite of the slow rate of HD improvements in general. The NHDR has been a particularly relevant tool given that the government has increasingly acknowledged the poor HD situation and supported the NHDR's examination of key HD themes. Thus, the HD themes pursued are highly relevant to the effort to improve the poor HD situation of Zambia.

Zambia has provided an ‘enabling policy environment’ for the NHDR process for various reasons. The political climate has remained stable for some time albeit under a dominant party liberal democratic regime, which has allowed for open public debate and a reasonable degree of policy dialogue between stakeholders and government. The country does not have sharp, historically determined political cleavages, based for instance, external direct monopoly over wealth or extreme military or ethnic power struggles. Nor has the contest for power under multi-party politics and policy dialogue been as sharply polarized as in many other parts of Africa or the south in recent years. Thus, there is much scope for policy influence in areas such as HD, even though the enabling environment is limited by a variety of institutional constraints.

Most observers note that a process of ‘de-institutionalization of power or authority’ has become a major constraint to the promotion of HD or national development policy, planning and implementation. While some institutions such as schooling have improved slightly, the evidence suggests the weakening of key state institutions since the 1980s (ministries, watchdogs, the judiciary, local authorities, etc.). Government departments have less expert analytic capacity and inadequate resources to meet the wages required to advance HD in key social services (education and health).

The HD activities of civil society organizations have tended to be dispersed and to lack focus because of their short-term approach to project planning and dependence on shifting funding priorities. Moreover, their approaches to public collective action focus excessively on organizing workshops, which consume the efforts of a plethora of weak NGOs. In a largely rural political economy, the weakening of traditional authority institutions also hinders broad participation in HD activities. Universities have lost valuable staff resources as scholars emigrate and turn to other activities.

One consequence of this situation is limited capacity to implement the HD approach. Indeed there is no hostility to the HD approach. Yet it has been noted that the “excessive external influence”, especially of the key large donors and the Bretton Woods institutions, on the broader economic policy is a critical constraint to implementing the NHDR proposals to improve HD.

In this context the challenge facing initiatives such as the NHDR is to encourage both institutions as well as individuals to not only embrace the HD concept and approach, but also to advocate for its application in the face of the structural adjustment oriented policy advocated by the PRSP and its predecessors. Building awareness on HD was perhaps one of the first accomplishments of the NHDR process, followed by government and civil society responses to the PRSPs and recently to the MDG process. Yet, capacity constraints in this area remain.

Indeed, several analysts and institutional actors (national and local donors) espouse one or another version of an HD approach to national development, even if implementation of the HD approach is found to be less satisfactory. The NHDR and the global HDR instruments have promoted wider thinking on a more holistic HD concept, in spite of the capacity constraints. Indeed, the leadership role of the UNDP in promoting the HD approach is now well recognized and encouraged by the government and some key civil society organizations, as noted recently in their important role in mobilizing development partners to contribute to the 5<sup>th</sup> National Development Planning process and the Joint Assistance Strategy. Some of the more specific influences of the NHDR process on policy, intellectual trends and the capacities of the HD policy community, and specific constraints on such influence, are elaborated in section 5.

### **3      **Zambian NHDRs: content and relevance****

Zambia started the production process of NHDRs in 1997, and since then it has produced four reports, with a fifth NHDR currently in production. The content of each NHDR and their relevance to Zambia's HD challenges are examined below.

#### **Human development report 1997: Poverty**

The first Zambia HDR, which was produced in 1997, was on the theme of poverty. The specific issues covered in the 1997 report included: health, education, growth, employment and sustainable livelihoods, human security, equity, environment, participation and the HDI. The 1997 report aimed at producing a benchmark of data on the human condition in Zambia and laid the groundwork for future reports. It provided the HDI and Human Poverty Index, as well as calculations of the gender-related HDI, the Gender Empowerment Measure and the Inequality-Adjusted HDI. The report also calculated a new Index of Participation that measures changes in the levels of people's participation over time.

The report reviewed the progress made and the setbacks the country faced in promoting HD during the nineties. The report showed that poverty was high in Zambia, with nearly 70 percent of the population below the poverty line. It also showed that with the exception of Lusaka and Luapula provinces, where poverty has increased over the past decade, poverty reduced marginally at the national level with the western, southern and north-western provinces showing the most improvement. The highlight of this report was that while poverty remained pervasive in Zambia, there was some improvement in the human condition and the level of poverty during this decade. The improvements were mostly noted in rural areas rather than in the urban areas. However, the report highlighted the deterioration of social services, namely education, health, water and sanitation, and emphasized the need to address these deprivations and the empowerment of people.

The report is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents a brief account on Zambia, its people and the economy. The state of HD in Zambia is analysed in its various dimensions in Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 examines the poverty situation in the country. The report ends with some concluding observations.

## **Human development report 1998: Provision of Basic Social Services**

The theme for the 1998 report was Provision of Basic Services. The report provided an update on the contents of the 1997 NHDR and focused on the provision of and access to basic social services in Zambia. It brought out the highly deteriorated state of the social sectors, namely education, health, water and sanitation, and it was hoped that addressing these deprivations would result in the empowerment of the people. In addition to providing the HDI, Human Poverty Index, the gender-related HDI, and the Gender Empowerment Measure, the 1998 NHDR also provided the Inequality-Adjusted HDI. The report also calculated a new Index of Participation that measured the changes in the levels of people's participation over time.

The report presented a historical background of Zambia, spanning the 34 years since independence. It showed that Zambia had transformed itself from being a country with only 1000 secondary school graduates and 100 university graduates to a country that produced hundreds of thousands of secondary school graduates and nearly six thousand university graduates annually. The report challenged the government and its development partners to address the debt issue that had crippled the country and its ability to provide basic services for its people. It also highlighted the efforts that Zambia had made to address the debt issue, including the international Jubilee 2000 campaign. This campaign called for the cancellation of debt of the poorest countries as well as for more effective participation by Zambia in the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The report reflected that public expenditure on social services had failed to keep pace with the growth rates in population and inflation with the result that real per capita social service expenditure had declined.

## **Human development report 1999/2000: Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods**

The 1999/2000 NHDR traced the developments of formal and informal employment and income growth patterns in Zambia, as well as the different livelihoods being pursued by

various social groups. The report highlighted the erosion of Zambia's HD in general, and explored the linkages between HD, employment and the promotion of a sustainable livelihood system. The report showed that Zambia has great potential to achieve sustainable growth and to ensure sustainable livelihoods. The report emphasized the need for the Government and other stakeholders to fully harness the resources available (physical, human and natural capital including existing indigenous knowledge systems and social relations) to increase employment and sustainable livelihoods.

This theme was in response to the challenge presented by the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development at the launch of the 1998 NHDR, when she encouraged UNDP to formulate proposals to address the growing youth unemployment problem in Zambia. As employment and sustainable livelihoods empower people and contribute towards their human development, the theme was very relevant.

The report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 focuses on the concept of HD; Chapter 2 covers the country, people and economy; Chapter 3 looks at the state of HD and human deprivation in Zambia; Chapters 4 and 5 focus on employment and sustainable livelihoods and Chapter 6 proposes interventions for sustainable livelihoods and HD. The report does not define the target group and no supplementary or alternative indexes were developed for this report.

### **Human development report 2003: Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger in Zambia: An Agenda for Enhancing the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals**

The 2003 report exposed the extent of the humanitarian crisis in Zambia and made recommendations for the reversal of the crisis.

This report also covered poverty, a major theme of previous reports. Till date, the NHDRs had demonstrated how the high levels of poverty and hunger had continued, leading to the deterioration in Zambia's HDI. The 2003 report provided several examples of

successful initiatives, illustrating that poverty and hunger in Zambia were neither inevitable nor irreversible. The report proposed actions to achieve several objectives including adequate response to food shortages, and improving the domestic environment to support the growth and recovery of agriculture to prevent the recurrence of famines. The report also proposed that a variety of new policies and programmes be put in place to help decrease poverty and hunger.

The 2003 report starts by revisiting the concept of HD. Chapter 2 describes the policy environment and performance, Chapter 3 profiles poverty and hunger in the country while Chapter 4 describes the state of HD in Zambia. The final chapter offers recommendations for addressing HD challenges.

While the production process was still coordinated by UNDP, the 2003 report showed a marked difference in terms of an increase in the number of participating stakeholders, which included civil society, employers' confederations and traditional leaders.

### **Human development report 2005: Enhancing the Capacity of Households to Fight HIV/AIDS**

This report was in the process of being produced at the time of the field mission. The theme emerged in the context of intensive public debate on and the government's concern over Zambia's drop in the global HDI ranking, which was largely due to the decline in life expectancy levels arising from HIV/AIDS mortality.

Desk studies and pilot field work were being conducted, alongside the usual consultative processes followed in earlier reports. The report promises to deepen the understanding of strategies to tackle HIV/AIDS at the household level, including through tapping locally diverse cultural and other resources.

Our assessment suggests that this focus is timely in that it provides for a review of HIV/AIDS strategies used over the last decade, which have resulted in a slight decline in prevalence. The approach adopted also indicates the search for strategies that can deepen



efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS in a decentralized manner, and that the NHDR data disaggregation can support such policy analysis.

### **Assessment of relevance**

The themes that have so far been selected for the NHDRs were recognized by most of the interviewees to be highly relevant to the HD situation and challenges facing Zambia. Through our assessment of Zambia's HD priority needs and the public sentiment, we concluded that NHDRs have been highly relevant. The focus of three reports on poverty and services is apposite. Levels of poverty that remained high – at above 72 percent in 1998 – have seen marginal improvements – dropping to 68 percent in 2003 – especially in rural areas. This reflects the effects of good harvest years, as well as the effects of the growth of GDP, which has been at 5 percent during the last few years.

Analysts, development practitioners and private citizens question this 'growth', suggesting that it reflects the concentrated growth from mining sector recovery and the generally highly unequal income and wealth patterns. External outflows of income and excessive subsidies to new investors at the expense of expanded employment, wage increases, and social service provision increments have limited the promised 'trickle down' effects of this slight increase in the growth rate.

The incidence of hunger during the last five years has also been critical, given the frequent full-scale and region specific droughts experienced and Zambia's dependence on food aid. The need to diversify sources of employment and livelihoods in this situation, and to improve the efficiency of social services provision were timely topics pursued by the NHDRs. The 2005 NHDR's focus on HIV/AIDS, with a view to highlighting new local and household strategies to address the pandemic, is also timely given the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and its negative impact on life expectancy and productive efforts, and various other social costs. Whether the HIV/AIDS theme should have been treated as a priority in earlier NHDRs, given its wide prevalence, is a moot point.

The reports have cumulatively built upon each other. This has brought coherence to the information available on poverty attributes, while informing the PRSP and MDG

processes, which deal with similar themes, albeit using different approaches. Zambia's efforts to produce a Fifth National Development Plan appear to be based on HD knowledge gained through the UNDP/NHDR and the civil society policy network. This National Development Plan was not ready at the time of writing, so we were unable to assess its HD content.

## **4 The trajectory of the Zambia NHDR**

### **4.1 The production process**

#### ***4.1.1 Theme selection, writing and review of NHDRs***

The themes for Zambia's NHDRs are decided upon by the Zambia NHDR Advisory Committee, which comprises representatives from the private sector, civil society, government, academia, trade unions, youth forums, traditional healers and chiefs. Associations that represent various professionals, such as economists and medical doctors, are also consulted. The Advisory Committee was selected through a broad-based NHDR stakeholder meeting held in June 2002. The process was managed by the UNDP in consultation with government and some NGOs during earlier review workshops. The criteria used for selection included balancing sectoral representation (government, civil society and research), and ensuring that relevant policy analysis and NHDR process management were available. The Advisory Committee also comprises members of parliament from both ruling and opposition parties, in an attempt to capture diverse priorities and approaches.

Consultants for the production of the NHDRs are selected through a competitive bidding process through advertising in the national media, and through an executive search process. The sub-committee of the NHDR Advisory Committee conducts the selection process.

In 1995 a team of experts from the University of Zambia and the former National Commission for Development Planning was assembled to produce the 1997 NHDR. The preparation team also included staff from UN agencies (14), representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (2), staff from the CSO (2) and two independent consultants. Heads of UN agencies and senior government officials reviewed the report drafts. The former UNDP Deputy Resident Representative supervised the report production process. NHDRs of other UNDP country offices were consulted to inform this initial process.

According to the NHDR Coordinator Mr. Omoefe Oyaide, heads of UN agencies in Zambia and their representatives in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Sustainable Human

Development assisted in choosing the theme of the 1998 report. This became the general trend for theme selection of subsequent reports. Zambia's NHDR production process was a largely collaborative effort between the Government and UNDP.

From 2002, the production process of the NHDRs became more broadly participatory as it emerged from the decisions of broad-based stakeholder meetings that defined the preparatory process and agreed on the themes of the NHDRs. Thus, the theme selection reflected a broader consensus on priorities.

A Review Team was established to provide technical guidance to the NHDR process. This mechanism integrates various line ministries and departments, the UN System and civil society (including academia) to review draft documents prepared by a team of consultants. The Advisory Committee supervises this review process and provides broader intellectual advice and policy guidance to the NHDR process.

The NHDR process, including production and dissemination, entails the following activities:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Hiring of consultants
- Advisory committee review
- Technical review meetings
- Training on HD concepts
- Report review workshops
- Dissemination (launch, report distribution)
- Follow-up workshop panel discussions
- Follow-up dialogues on specific recommendations

The first NHDR was produced in 1997, the second in 1998 and the third in 1999/2000 (within 18 months). However, no NHDRs were produced during 2001 and 2002. This gap was attributed to some degree of production fatigue and limitations in the absorptive capacities of various government and civil society actors in the NHDR process, at a time

when the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) networking was established to respond to Zambia's PRSP process. This initiative however used the NHDR findings for PRSP advocacy.

#### ***4.1.2 Assessment of production process***

##### *Ownership issues*

The issue of 'ownership' must be considered in the context of UNDP itself maintaining its position within the UN community as the prime coordinator of activities to promote the idea of HD. Observers interviewed suggested that UNDP needed to maintain some level of institutional ownership of the NHDR as a project and tool, while at the same time facilitating national ownership of the NHDRs' content and application of the HD principle. Moreover, UNDP argued that it deliberately did not sub-contract the NHDR in order to maintain the NHDR's independence and to facilitate its 'national' ownership. Indeed this approach suggests that the UNDP is more concerned that the NHDRs retain relevance among a wider constituency of Zambians, emphasizing national ownership of the contents rather than the NHDR project *per se*.

The general perception is that during the production of the first two NHDRs, the UNDP (probably more at the Headquarters level) dominated the NHDR production process (theme selection, consultants selection, report writing) and that this limited the sense of national ownership of the NHDR process. In 2002, the constituencies involved were widened, when a multi-stakeholder NHDR workshop was called to ensure balance in the NHDR's relevance and ownership.

The NHDR production process has increasingly involved individuals from government, civil society, research and the private sector as experts, advisors, data suppliers and opinion mobilizers. The role of government and civil society in the selection of themes has gradually increased since the production of the first report in 1997. Use of government and CSO data has encouraged a sense of ownership of the NHDR within the government, even though their role in the production process is limited. The 2003 NHDR also used NGO

data sources on income and consumption needs, thus reinforcing the NGOs' sense of influence through the NDHR.

The HD issues raised in the report were very relevant to the challenges confronting Zambia. Despite efforts made after independence to improve the HD conditions of the people, poverty levels continued to rise and the HDI deteriorated. The NHDR helped to map out an agenda for reducing poverty and hunger, thus contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

#### *Report quality and independence*

Most observers, as well as the evaluation team, agreed upon the intellectual independence of the experts involved in the NHDR production process. However, authors suggested that report quality and the production process were compromised by the arduous, time consuming consultative process, which did not adequately remunerate the experts for their efforts to incorporate stakeholder inputs.

#### *Innovativeness and adaptation*

The flexibility of the NHDR process in deciding to focus the last three reports on MDG priorities as key themes has improved the relevance of the NHDRs in the policy process and policy community. By adding new indices on poverty, participation and gender, the NHDR process adapted to the needs of civil society constituencies and to the government's commitments to the MDG process.

Moreover, inputs of NGOs, especially in providing data based on more qualitative assessment development indicators using primary sources, has brought some innovation to Zambian policy analysis (e.g. the Basic Needs Basket) and better connected the NHDR to common HD issues and advocacy.

## **4.2 The dissemination process**

### ***4.2.1 The dissemination strategy***

Until the 2003 NHDR, there was no effective dissemination strategy for the NHDR, apart from the high profile report launch event, the distribution of the report and one or two workshops. The dissemination strategy now entails the following elements:

- Launch of the reports
- Distribution of the reports
- Panel discussions
- Copies of the report on CD for further dissemination
- Posting the reports on the UNDP website

All the reports were marked by elaborate launches at the national level. The reports are usually launched by a government Minister. The launches are attended by government Ministry representatives, UN Agencies, civil society organizations, businesses and labour unions . On an average, 1000 copies of each issue are produced. Several panel discussions on the NHDRs' recommendations are also held after the launch events. The reports are distributed to all stakeholders (one to three copies per institution). Extra copies are available at US \$5 per copy. All the four reports are easily accessible on the UNDP website. The distribution of the reports has also been made easy by putting the reports on CD-Rom.

According to UNDP, 500 free copies of the 2003 NHDR were distributed, and 400 copies were sold. Data available on some of the freely distributed copies are shown in the following table.

**Table 2: NHDR Distribution (2003)**

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>No. of copies</b>
Government	41
Universities and colleges	11
Bank of Zambia	2
Zambia Investment Centre	1
Lusaka City Council	3
Private sector	1
Press/Media	8
UN Agencies	11
Civil society organizations	12
Other organizations	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>

Free copies were also reported to have been given to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, for onward distribution to the provincial and district offices of government.

UNDP records on the patterns of report dissemination or distribution are poor, as they could not provide us information on report distribution over time, or any analysis of the unmet demand for reports, which our interviews revealed existed. Nor is there adequate recording of the media coverage of NHDR processes over time, let alone of other effects or influences of NHDR dissemination.

#### **4.2.2 Media coverage**

The print media – both public and private – has occasionally covered issues relating to the NHDR and the global HDR. On average, it has cited the NHDR twice during the year of its publication, focussing on the theme selection and the launch of the report. Other UNDP programmes get more frequent mention (at least 10 times each year). There was limited information on radio and television coverage of the NHDRs.

Given the importance of the media in the dissemination of any policy agenda, a number of our interviewees suggested that media coverage of the NHDR process was a critical weakness of the dissemination strategy.



### ***4.2.3 Assessment of the dissemination process***

So far, follow-up on the NHDR policy recommendations has been limited; there is no coherent or focused set of advocacy activities. The influence of the NHDR is therefore limited by the weakness of its dissemination strategy. Improving media coverage, expanding the NHDR discussion fora and systematically following up on recommended actions at the provincial level could enhance the effectiveness of the dissemination and policy influence process. To some extent the use of partnerships, especially among those involved in the NHDR production and dissemination process, has counter-veiled this weakness.

## **4.3 Partnerships**

### ***4.3.1 Nature of NHDR partnerships***

The NHDR has developed a variety of partnerships, both institutional as well as individual, with various government units, civil society organizations and the private sector, as well as with two universities (see Table 3 below). Most of these partnerships have tended to be “loose and temporary”, based on the expertise and role of the given organization in activities defined by the theme of a specific NHDR edition. The use of loose partnerships by the UNDP/NHDR team has been justified on the grounds of ensuring and maintaining the independence of the overall NHDR process. They argue its importance in helping to build consensus among multiple actors and in protecting the ‘capture’ of the NHDR process by sectarian (e.g. academic, political and other) agendas.

Civil society organizations, particularly NGOs, labour unions and business organizations, are also involved as partners through participation in the NHDR Advisory Committee, the Peer Review Team and in various HD seminars and HD training activities.

The production of NHDRs was the result of a collaborative effort between UNDP, all other UN agencies in Zambia and relevant government agencies namely, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services and the CSO. The Ministries of Education and Health also provided data for the NHDRs. Data was shared by the following organizations: CSO, Ministry of Finance and

Economic Development, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zambia, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund, and the Ministries of Education, Health, Environment and Natural Resources and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

Representatives of relevant government and UN agencies reviewed the draft reports. A series of retreats were held for review of the 1998 NHDR in August and October, before the report was finalized for publication.

Additional government ministries participated in the production of the 2003 NHDR. Civil society organizations, traditional leaders, politicians and the academia also increased their participation in the NHDR process from 2002. Some examples of the partnerships developed so far are listed in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Profile of NHDR partnerships**

Partners	Roles played	Partnership status
1. Government units		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Finance; Planning Division</li> <li>• Central Statistics Office</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory/policy inputs</li> <li>Data</li> <li>Technological/data</li> <li>Technical/data</li> <li>Dissemination/advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous</li> <li>Continuous</li> <li>Temporary</li> <li>Temporary</li> <li>Occasional</li> </ul>
2. Civil Society		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economics Association of Zambia</li> <li>• CSPR</li> <li>• Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection</li> <li>• Medical Women's Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Data supply, advocacy</li> <li>Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous</li> <li>Occasional</li> <li>Occasional</li> <li>Occasional</li> </ul>
3. Universities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Zambia</li> <li>• Copperbelt University</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research; review</li> <li>Advisory; review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular, but varied researchers</li> <li>Regular, continuous</li> </ul>
4. Private sector through the Economics Association of Zambia		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional</li> </ul>

In the NHDR process, the roles and responsibilities of the various partners depended on their relevance to the NHDR theme and also on their relationship to the policy-making process. Academic institutions have played more of a technical-analytic role with some level of policy advocacy, while civil society organizations have played a larger role in

dissemination and ‘tactical’ advocacy. The government role has been in defining policy priorities, and providing data and general support to dissemination and policy dialogues.

Professional associations such as the Medical Women’s Association and economic research organizations play a critical role in identifying specific issues for the NHDRs, providing expertise and data, and reviewing the reports. For instance, the employers’ confederation has been interested in learning new approaches to employee welfare; the business association has been proposing private sector initiatives for improving service delivery (in health for example).

#### ***4.3.2 Assessment of the partnership strategy***

The loose and time-bound partnership with most of the government ministries, NGOs and researchers has indeed preserved the independence of NHDRs and of the organizations. The more permanent partnerships with the Ministry of Finance and the CSO have also been useful in maintaining government support for the NHDR process, and have led to a better understanding of the HD approaches and improved capacity. In most countries, the Ministry of Finance plays the aid coordination role for UNDP funds, making the Ministry a key partner in all UNDP-Government initiatives, including the production of NHDRs. All reports rely heavily on statistical information and figures from the CSO, making the office a strong partner in the NHDR production process.

It could be argued that an excessively broad-based process of partnership and consultations may spread the NHDR process too thin and lead to diminishing returns. Certain report writers felt exhausted by the process; managing many discussion fora leads to fatigue. Yet the initial buy-in that multiple partnerships have brought has been useful, and the relevance of NHDRs has been enhanced. Perhaps a focus on post-report production review might increase the effectiveness of dissemination and the influence of NHDRs. In addition, including the provincial level, with more disaggregated data, is critical for concrete HD actions to be broadened.

## 5 Influences of the NHDR

### 5.1 National policies

#### 5.1.1 Central government policies and planning

The influence of NHDRs on policy has tended to be indirect and has been one among many other sources (internal and external) of influence. Moreover, some of the NHDR influences have been described as “pushing an opening door”, or as having catalysed and highlighted already emerging policy shifts.

The NHDR has never had an ‘exclusive’ role in influencing the HD concept and approach in Zambia, although to some extent it played an important role in spreading awareness on HD principles among a wider range of government units and other stakeholders.

The NHDR has gained renewed ‘influence’ since 2002, when UNDP and other stakeholders decided to focus the NHDRs on MDG themes, which are seen as a particular challenge to Zambia. Thus, it has received increasing note from the government, being cited in various speeches, including the apex international fora.

**Table 4: Areas of NHDR planning influences**

Area	Policy influence
Poverty	Poverty action plans
Hunger	Food production support
Employment	Income trade offs for families (social services/other)
Livelihoods	Support to informal sector/SMEs
Health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budget increases</li><li>• Free services</li></ul>
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight life expectancy</li></ul>
Education services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal free primary education</li><li>• Budget increases</li></ul>
Broader policy framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State intervention</li><li>• Poverty budgets increase</li><li>• Basket funding (JAS)</li><li>• Monitoring (data)</li><li>• Decentralized plans</li></ul>

The influence of NHDRs on government policy has evolved through the use of various mechanisms: the involvement of key government officials in the report production process (theme selection, reviews of reports and government data provision) and in the launch

process; resource allocations by UNDP through UNDAF to government budgets; and through the pressures put on government by civil society organizations and the expected pressures from public awareness.

The Honourable Magande, MP Minister of Finance and National Planning, in his opening remarks at the Africa regional NHDR workshop, stated that the Government of Zambia had high regard for the NHDRs for several reasons:

- The NHDRs were strong advocacy tools and were being used to track progress in the attainment of the MDGs.
- NHDRs promoted HD through national focus on critical development issues, and had influenced the Government to revise national and sector policies to reflect the needs of the poor.
- The reports had played a major role in the Government's decision to formulate the national Poverty Reduction Action Plan, which in turn was the main background document for Zambia's PRSP.
- National budget allocations have been increased and directed towards HD priorities. The Government made a policy shift on budgetary provision for the social sectors, with additional emphasis on basic education and primary health care.

It appears that the Government's goal to reduce poverty levels from 70 percent to not more than 50 percent by the year 2004 was influenced by the NHDRs and associated stakeholder consultations. Moreover, the Government developed a National Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (1999-2004) as well as a National Poverty Reduction Action Plan (1999-2004) with the influence of data from the report.

It is also worth noting that Zambia's 2003 NHDR won the UNDP Award of Excellence in Support of the Millennium Development Goals. The 2003 NHDR provided the first assessment of Zambia's potential for achieving the MDGs, and it drew links to the national PRSP while providing a balance sheet on HD and summarizing progress on MDG target achievement and prospects for the future. For the first time the NHDR calculated HDIs as benchmarks for assessing the MDGs.

### ***5.2.2 Decentralization/local planning***

UNDP has also promoted the HD concept through complementary activities outside the narrowly defined NDHR project process. For instance, a study tour for government officials to examine the Brazil NHDR process enabled them to learn more about the use of disaggregated data for the NHDR process, as well as about managing statistics for monitoring MDGs based on the HDI approaches in Brazil. A UNDP project to support Geographic Information Systems capacities in Zambia, which are linked to NHDR data, has the potential to improve the collection and analysis of spatially disaggregated data, and to increase the relevance of the NHDRs. UNDP support to civil society advocacy around the PRSP process (the CSPR initiative) has substantially increased its policy role and is guided by key participants in the NDHR, acting in their capacities outside the NHDR process.

### **5.3 Data (statistics) and monitoring**

NHDRs and the global HDRs have increased public, government and civil society interest in the measurement of poverty and HD by highlighting key trends through the HDI and other indicators. This has led to some improvement in the monitoring and evaluation capacity in Zambia. More importantly, this interest has promoted greater analytic rigor, thinking and debates on the meaning of key HD statistics and data in general and questions about the reliability of data and capacities required to generate useful data. In general, the NHDR indicators and monitoring system have been adapted by the CSO and other government agencies.

NHDR facilitation and support to public institutions (the CSO and key Ministries) and civil society organizations has enhanced the information management capacities of these institutions, and somewhat influenced them to assemble improved data on key HD trends.

While one of the NHDR principles is to rely in the first instance on official sources of data, which in Zambia is managed by the CSO, some analysts interviewed felt that the reliance on existing CSO data does not contribute adequately to the development of civil society capacities, nor does it sufficiently promote research to improve range, quality and frequency of data. Better coordination through the NHDR process of data collection and

reporting among donors could rationalize the considered use of such resource and be a source of improved HD information capacities.

The global HDR's approaches to standardized data computations for ranking purposes are not seen to be transparent by national authorities, and their inconsistency with NHDR data could undermine the credibility of NHDRs. This has been the case particularly with the different figures on life expectancy produced by the global HDR on the one hand and the NHDR on the other. Indeed, the debate generated by these differences seems to have generated more national interest in some of the key HD indicators.

Moreover, the NHDR has placed greater demands on government and donors to be more transparent with data and more accountable in terms of its rigorous measurement. Some of the main donors appreciate HD data, and called for more data to be generated by NHDRs. Indeed they tend to compare their data with NHDR data.

### ***Constraints on policy influence***

Whereas the NHDR process alongside other instruments (PRSP, MDGs) has promoted, through the HD concept and approach, a coherent framework for planning and targeting the poor through defining resource allocations required for this purpose, various constraints limit the application of this framework. Limited government budgets and the low disbursement of aid result in limited resource allocations. Some growth oriented policies (such as privatization, investor tax holidays, the concession of large landholdings, the agricultural inputs support system, and fiscal policy curbs on the proportion of public sector, e.g. teachers' salaries) have had countervailing influences on the pursuit of HD.

The policies of International Financial Institutions, by limiting the revenue generation capacity of government, restricting expenditure on human capital (social sector wages, higher education budgets, etc), and widening rather than narrowing the gap in the distribution of income wealth and land, have restricted public and private capacities to promote HD at central and local government levels. Moreover this trend has reduced the capacity and political space for Zambia to plan and implement pro-poor or HD policies. Local government organizations (government units, traditional authority structures and non-state local area development

networks) have not had adequate financial and human resources to mobilize changes to budgetary allocations, which can adequately address the resource requirements of tackling the rural HD condition.

It is true that a visible HD policy community has emerged in Zambia, entailing improved interactions between government, civil society actors, researchers, private sector and development partners. However, the potential of this group is restricted not only by the burden of countervailing the allegedly pro-growth policies, but also by wider institutional constraints. Policy expertise within government and civil society organizations in various aspects of HD and planning in general is limited. The local critique of the allegedly pro-growth policies and the formulation of an alternative development strategy has been weak.

Some observers suggest that the HD policy community has gained ground by becoming less “submissive” to policy initiatives that countervail HD. For instance, the government rejected GMO (genetically modified organism) maize assistance<sup>2</sup>, and there is increasing civil society pressure on government to ensure that the Fifth National Development Plan retains a poverty focus<sup>3</sup>. However, it is suggested that the limited analytical and negotiation capacities of this community (e.g. around trade, debt and AID) render it not ‘aggressive enough’ to ensure the application of HD principles. The limited HD policy analysis capacities of NGOs’ have in particular restricted them to tactical advocacy activities.

A major constraint to the policy influences of the NHDR is the absence of critical HD relevant data, in spite of the NHDR’s significant contribution to such a database and management capacities. Key government officials and researchers suggest that while the government is keen to utilize ‘convincing information’ on HD processes, such data is lacking in key aspects. These include disaggregated or provincial information on various classes of agricultural production; asset and land ownership data (equity/distribution patterns);

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<sup>2</sup> In the wake of three widespread droughts in Zambia between 2001 and 2005, the Zambian government formulated a policy restricting the supply of GMO maize by key food aid agencies, such as USAID. Not only was more non-GMO food imported from South African markets, but also a scientific process of assessing the suitability of GMO food imports was initiated. This policy stance was heavily advocated by many of the NGOs involved in the NHDR policy community, as a backdrop to the NHDR that focused on food security issues.

<sup>3</sup> This was advocated for by the network of NGOs coordinated by the CSPR Secretariat. This organization evolved from their participation in the NHDR focused on poverty. It then advocated around the PSRP process, and has increased efforts to influence the Fifth National Development Plan.



information on the impacts of policies such as agricultural support and HIV/AIDS support etc.; and more reliable data on social service indicators. This constraint affects both the advocacy capacities of civil society and researchers/analysts, as well as the absorptive potential that policy makers may have.

Lack of this data is a critical drawback for Zambia and most African countries that are agro-based. Land ownership and its productive use in agriculture is a major area for the poverty reduction strategy, and the availability of disaggregated data on land use, inputs, technologies and productivity are critical to income and food security policies. We found that lack of information in this area limited the discussions on whether current budgetary support for small farmers was effective, and to advance rural HD in that regard is critical.

Thus the extent to which the NHDR, especially HDI, data, and data from the CSO and other UN reports have been used to target HD resource allocations at a disaggregated level (district and lower level) has been limited. But the CSO director suggested that their levels of funding and staffing were not adequate to address the numerous demands for NHDR data, especially because some of the disaggregated data required expensive quantitative surveys, which could only be conducted periodically.

The 2005 NHDR attempted to address this lacuna on a small scale by conducting rapid surveys in a few districts to assess the source and regulation of HIV/AIDS spread and examine coping mechanisms at the household level. It also supported CSO in managing its demographic and household survey processes.

## **5.4 Intellectual influences**

### ***5.4.1 Research and policy analysis influences***

Scholars reported that several academics have cited the data and findings of both the global HDR and the NHDR in their published papers and speeches. This applies mainly to those who have worked on the NHDR or their associates. The publication of NHDRs is appreciated by scholars mainly because they have helped to broaden the concept of national development. However, there was some concern that while the HDI and the HD approach in general have helped overcome the simplistic overemphasis of the economic perspective based on per capita

GDP in development, the HDI concept may fall into traps of oversimplification in other development dimensions<sup>4</sup>.

Many interviewees felt that the majority of social scientists in Zambia did not rely on NHDR as a source, nor did many actively integrate the HD concept and the HDI and related indices into their research and teaching. Also, not all who used the NHDR data adequately questioned its quality. This however may point to a lack of skills and depth of knowledge on HDI, and the fact that research organizations do not have adequate resources to generate new and alternate data, especially disaggregated field-based information.

The UNDP Zambia office hosted the first ever Africa-wide workshop on NHDRs, under the leadership of UNDP's, Regional Bureau for Africa. This initiative brought together over 100 NDHR project managers, various NHDR stakeholders and intellectuals from the continent. It is notable that the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia and the Chancellor of the Copperbelt University attended the workshop, together with five other academics from these universities. Most of them presented scholarly papers on the NHDR process.

#### ***5.4.2 Influence on tertiary education***

Over the past two years, the two main universities of Zambia have shown an interest in teaching aspects of HD. The Vice Chancellor and professors from over five departments in the faculty of humanities of the University of Zambia are developing a new course on HD for introduction into the undergraduate public policy programme. The leadership of the Copperbelt University is also considering an HD course for its postgraduate training programme. The University of Zambia School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Development Studies, uses the NHDR as reading material for some of its courses.

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<sup>4</sup> Professor Robert Serpell, Vice-Chancellor, University of Zambia, in his address at the UNDP Regional Conference on NHDRs in Lusaka, Zambia (18-20 October, 2005) stated that the HDI as a resource for national planning in Zambia was a mixed blessing. He expressed that human societies were complex and that no amount of balancing or weighting can adequately express this complexity

Some in the University argue, however, that this HD training remains an ad hoc addition to a few departments. The HD concept could be more systematically introduced at various levels of the University. Those leading these new HD course developments have all been closely involved in the NHDR process as advisors, authors and reviewers.

The National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research also incorporates both the global and national HDRs in its work. The reports are being used as training and research resource materials. This interest is a result of the influences of NHDR advocacy and stakeholder consultations.

In addition, the HD concept and approach has penetrated the training or capacity building programmes of various constituencies. For instance, UNDP organized a workshop on HD concepts, which helped train parliamentarians, NGOs, professional associations and researchers in specific thematic areas. Within civil society, it is NGOs that are most actively engaged with the NHDR process, as opposed to trade unions, political parties and rural community-based organizations, hence their predominance in the training.

A wide range of people in government and civil society, including politicians and academicians, have benefited from HD training. While this effort is thinly spread and has only intensified during the last three years, most of the actors interested in the NDHR process who we interviewed, expressed interest in more HD training.

Minister Magande noted that there was a need to deepen the understanding of the HD concept and indicators in Zambia. There is also a need for publication of both provincial reports as well as simplified versions of the reports. The quality and availability of data must also be improved. There are serious data gaps and inconsistencies in data sources. A need for further capacity building in data collection and analysis at all levels is evident.

## **5.5 Influences on civil society**

The policy activities of a range of civil society organizations have been influenced by the NHDR, and these organizations have in turn influenced government policies on poverty in general, using HD concepts. The main beneficiaries and partners of the NHDR influences are:

- National Economic Advisory Council
- Economic Association of Zambia
- ZIPP
- National AIDS Council
- CSPR
- PACT Zambia
- Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
- Medical Women's Association of Zambia

However, so far only a few NGOs have benefited from the NHDR influence, as the participation of civil society organizations in rural areas is low. These NGOs and professional associations have also influenced some aspects of the NHDRs and have played a role in its dissemination. Much of their advocacy has not necessarily reflected formal partnership with UNDP/NHDR, although they have been interactive.

We found some important examples of the influences of the NDHR process on civil society organizations. Firstly, NGOs that participated in the earlier NHDRs on poverty established the CSPR network. This network has been effectively lobbying the government and donors on the true poverty relevance of the PRSPs, the Highly Indebted Poor Country process, and now the Fifth National Development Plan. These NGOs continue to participate in the NHDR stakeholder meetings, NHDR reviews and follow-up seminars. Another example is the incorporation of the JCTR'S bread basket measure into one of the NHDRs, which has gained legitimacy in government discussions on employment and income policies. The JCTR is one of the most active NHDR stakeholders.

## **6 Strategic position of NHDRs in UNDP/Zambia**

The Zambia NHDR process is considered by the UNDP Lusaka office to be a key instrument in enhancing its mission, which focuses on building national capacity to achieve the MDGs as defined by Zambia's strategies for poverty reduction and as reflected in Zambia's PRSP and Fifth National Development Plan. The UN family supports this through UNDAF. The current Zambia UNDAF (2002-2006) focuses on three areas, namely: HIV/AIDS, governance and environment, and natural resources. The aim is to build capacities for a coordinated, multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS, to build an effectively managed and accountable apparatus of government, and to promote the integration of the government's environmental resource management and poverty reduction efforts.

The PRSP was used as the basis for estimating the resources required for meeting the MDG targets by 2015. The PRSP provided the basis for the UNDAF and UNDP's second country cooperation framework (CCF), which emphasize the MDGs. The PRSP provided the operational framework for CCF which in turn highlighted HD concerns. The Zambia PRSP noted that the Government had formulated a National Poverty Reduction Action Plan with the assistance of UNDP, a process that benefited from the NHDRs. These interconnections between the UNDAF, NHDR, PRSP and MDG processes suggest that the NHDR may be realizing a new lease of life within the wider context of UNDP/UN initiatives. The Government's current strong commitment to the MDG process and its collaboration with the UNDP on MDGs, which in turn are informed by some NDHR findings, consolidates the importance of NHDRs.

The UNDP Lusaka office regards the NHDR as a critical element of its strategy, which given its limited financial resources, is focused on policy support and capacity building. Indeed, through its collaboration with government, the NHDR process has enabled the local UNDP office to deepen its interactions with government and civil society, and has created an enabling environment for policy advocacy on HD principles, resource allocation priorities and related implementation issues. In this vein then, the strategic value of the

NHDR process, together with other UNDP initiatives, has been the creation of a small but significant HD ‘policy community’, which is gradually promoting important HD issues. Moreover, various persons whom we consulted suggested that the mere fact of raising key HD issues, let alone influencing specific policy changes (a process which is not easily attributable), was a significant value added by the NHDR process to Zambia’s dialogues on development and poverty.

While the global HDR had for some years put the UNDP on the ‘map’, the resultant global peer review on HD has helped the NHDR raise relevant HD issues with the Zambian national policy community. Moreover, linking NHDR findings to the MDG reporting process has forced the government to think seriously about poverty reduction strategies based on HD principles. The fact that the Zambian President has frequently referred to the NHDRs, that the national budget statement reflects on the NHDR findings, that the collection of data for government planning by the CSO is increasingly aligned to NHDR indicators, and that the government assessment of MDG progress tends to be related to NHDR assessments, suggests that the NHDR has gained added strategic value, and places the UNDP in a more pivotal relationship with government.

Using the NHDR to also assess some of the MDGs not only deepens understanding of the MDG targets and constraints, but also provides a more systematic critique and follow-up on the MDGs from an HD perspective. While there is the danger that the NHDRs could become a minor appendage of the MDG process, this need not follow if the NHDR process retains its independence and adequate funding. In fact, several interviewees felt that NHDR and MDG processes had useful complementariness and synergies, and that this provided a niche for the UNDP.

Perceptions of the strategic importance and positioning of the NHDR in Zambia vary widely among key donors and within the UN. Some see the HD concept and NHDR as central to current UNDP initiatives and government efforts, although they lament the weak coordination among UN agencies around HD issues. A few development partners see the NHDR process as marginal even to the UNDP local offices’ own core agenda. This largely incorrect perception appeared however to be coloured by the competing interests and the

distance kept between some agencies and the UNDP, given that they all produce indicators and sectoral reports. The NHDR process could benefit, however, from greater inputs by UN agencies focused on NHDR report themes.

Many UN agencies and key donors who fund them believe that HD concepts have been critical in informing their thinking and to some extent their programming strategies, while a number of UN agencies use the NHDRs mainly as a quick reference source. A few officers in critical UN agencies were found not to be adequately aware of the issues raised in NHDRs, including those in reports that addressed Zambian issues directly connected to their core mandate. Many donors are more attuned to the global HDR, focusing on the HDI ranking, since this helps justify their presence in Zambia, and some have suggested that the HDI ranking be used to classify development assistance priorities. This would elevate the strategic value of both the global HDR and the NHDR, but it is unlikely to happen.

Some donors invest much in gathering their own data on indicators similar to those found in NHDRs, which is an expensive undertaking when done individually. It has been suggested that pooling resources into the NHDR process could be more effective and lend greater strategic value to the NHDR process in future.

UNDP Lusaka has, through its UNDAF process and as a result of direct requests from the government, increasingly played a central role in coordinating donor support to the government. This, together with the vital support that the NHDR has provided to the PRSP and MDG processes, as supported by UNDP, suggests a significant strategic importance attached to NHDRs by government and other stakeholders. Indeed, UNDP Zambia's commitment of core funding through UNDAF to the NHDR project is an indication of the strategic importance that UNDP Zambia assigns to the NHDR. The importance that the Zambian government assigns to the NHDR by ensuring that it gets core funding compares much more favourably to other countries in Africa where the NHDRs have precarious ad hoc funding from a variety of donors, as was noted in the African NHDR conference in Lusaka<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> UNDP regional conference on NHDRs, 18-20 October 2005, Lusaka ( Zambia).

Yet critics have argued that the NHDR is not well positioned enough to influence government policy towards an adequate emphasis on HD, and that the Bretton Woods institutions continue to exert overarching influence on overall development strategy, particularly macroeconomic management. This means that the role of the UNDP/NHDR in influencing the budgeting process for HD allocations has been limited. Moreover, some policy analysts argue that since the NHDR process in Zambia has not adequately challenged global issues that fundamentally contribute to undermining HD (e.g. trade, debt and aid), its influence and thus strategic value in promoting HD is limited.

One of the key challenges of improving NHDR's strategic value in small countries exhausted by multi-donor support programmes, is for it to be used more effectively in promoting 'one UN, one programme', using the HD perspective informed by improved indicators, to promote improved and innovative national development planning.

The NHDR has the opportunity in Zambia to facilitate and coordinate inputs into Zambia's Fifth National Development Plan. It can do this by broadening its focus from mining and energy-driven growth to promoting broad-based HD, based on promoting smallholder agriculture for rural development. The NHDR could also provide a basis for in-depth assessments of progress made on the implementation of the Fifth National Development Plan, highlighting progress in the achievements of MDG targets, and advising on implementation priorities. This could be part of the UNDAF thrust of building national capacities for improved governance in terms of policy analysis and planning, and improved coordination of development assistance.



## 7 Lessons learned and challenges

### 7.1 Lessons

The following are lessons learned from the field mission:

- A key lesson from Zambia has been the flexibility of the NHDR process in linking its various report themes to the HD-based concept of poverty, and tying the NHDR to the UNDP's various initiatives. The Zambian NHDR process appears to have gained wider acceptance and a greater sense of ownership by developing a visible coherence and linkage between the NHDR tool and other tools, such as UNDAF, PRSP and MDGs, which involve the UNDP and a fairly wide group of development partners. In so doing the UNDP has gained credibility in terms of consistent inputs into government planning and donor interactions, and has used the NHDR to greater effect in dialogues with the government and enhanced the 'enabling environment' for the NHDR process.
- Through adequate consultations with government and civil society, the NHDR project can receive substantial commitment from the government through its agreement to commit core funding to NHDRs over time.
- The Zambia NHDR also shows that scattered national expertise within universities and other non-state institutions, which has formerly not been able to effectively interact and convey critical HD issues, can be mobilized towards focused input into HD policy debates. Through this, policy research and advocacy capacities can be built in a variety of organizations and the relevance of NHDRs can be enhanced.
- A new course on HD is being developed by the University of Zambia for introduction into the public policy programme. The leadership of the Copperbelt University is also considering an HD course for its post graduate training programme. The HD concept can be publicized and appreciated more through the introduction of these courses.
- UNDP's sponsorship of a study tour for government officials to examine the Brazil NHDR process provided an opportunity for learning the use of disaggregated data for the NHDR process. Getting the buy-in of government officials can influence formulation of pro-poor policies.

- The provision of data based on more qualitative assessment development indicators by NGOs – for example, the JCTR’s ‘basic needs basket’ – can have a significant impact on the NHDR content and on pooling policy advocacy initiatives. In this regard, the NHDR addressed the basic needs as defined by an organization connected to poor communities. Yet one must recognize that such NGOs tend to have limited technical capacities to manage quantitative data, and that they may need support for qualitative data contributions.
- Putting the reports on CD-ROM widens the report distribution.
- Aligning the Zambia NHDR to MDGs ensures that the major poverty challenges in the country are addressed. MDGs provide a broad framework that many countries (Zambia included) have made a commitment to achieving. Working outside that framework may not make much sense if the targets set are not addressed through additional initiatives such as the NHDRs and their extant policy influence. In this regard, the NHDR agenda should be complementary to the MDG framework.

## **8 Concluding remarks**

The NHDR process in Zambia, taking into account the five reports produced so far, has had a broadly positive influence on HD thinking, the policy making process, HD indicators, intellectual orientations and civil society advocacy for poverty reduction in general. The use of NHDR data by government and civil society organizations, the use of the NHDR to guide and inform both the PRSP and MDG processes, and the growth of participatory approaches in the NHDR process reflect the growing significance of the NHDR process. The Zambia NHDR themes and issues raised have been relevant to the country's key HD challenges, and taken together, the reports have built deeper knowledge and advice on poverty issues.

The government of Zambia has been receptive to the NHDR process and has provided an 'enabling environment' for its production and dissemination, while key NGOs and intellectuals have consistently supported the NHDR process and used its results. However, the dissemination process requires refinement to improve the effective national use of the NHDR process, while improved partnerships are needed to follow-up on NHDR recommendations to ensure its influence within the context of MDGs and new national development planning strategies.

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## **Annex 2 List of interviewees**

### **Programme for the national human development report evaluation (25 October 2005 – 31 October 2005)**

Mr. James Bednar, Mission Director, USAID  
Mr. D. Chimfwembe, Director, Planning, Ministry of Health  
Ms. E Chirwa, National Economist, UNDP  
Dr. Dennis Chiwele, RuralNet Associates Limited  
Mr. Aeneas C. Chuma, UNDP Resident Representative  
Mr. Muna Hantuba, President, Economics Association of Zambia  
Father Peter Henriot, Director, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection  
Mr. Eiji Inui, Resident Representative, JICA  
Mr. Eliko Kalaba, Planner, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives  
Dr. Augustus Kapungwe, Lecturer, Department of Social Development Studies, University of Zambia  
Ms. Jennier Kargbo, Director, ECA  
Dr. Christine M. Kaseba, President, Medical Women's Association of Zambia  
Ms. Sibi Lawson, Head, Policy & Partnerships & Vulnerability Assessment Unit, WFP  
Mr. Akashambatwa M. Lewanika, Politician, National Economic Advisory Council  
Professor Geoffrey Lungwangwa, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Zambia  
Ms. Besinati Mpepo, Coordinator, Civil Society for Poverty Reduction  
Mr. Muweme Muweme, Coordinator, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection  
Professor Muyunda Mwanalushi, Vice Chancellor, Copperbelt University  
Dr. Anthony Mwanaumo, Project Coordinator, Food Security Research Project  
Ms. Josephine Mwenda, Senior Planner, Ministry of Finance and National Planning  
Mr. Hibeene Mwiinga, Principal Planner, Ministry of Finance and National Planning  
Dr. Buleti Nsemukila, Director, Central Statistical Office  
Dr. Mushiba Nyamazana, Economist, World Bank  
Mr. Bill Penoyar, Programme Officer, USAID  
Mr. Oladeji Popoola, Representative, UNFPA  
Ms. Bergitte Poulsen, Officer-in-Charge, ILO  
Professor V. Seshamani, Lecturer, Economics Department, University of Zambia  
Hon. Robert Sichinga, Politician  
Mr. Abdoulie Sireh-Jallow, Economic Advisor, UNDP  
Ms. Matondo Monde Yeta, PACT  
Ms. Mando Zulu, local consultant

## Annex 3

### Terms of Reference

#### Evaluation of National Human Development Report System: Zambia UNDP Evaluation Office

##### Context and purpose of the evaluation

*The human development report (HDR) was first launched in 1990 with the single goal of putting people back at the centre of the development process in terms of economic debate, policy and advocacy. The goal was both massive and simple, with far-ranging implications — going beyond income to assess the level of people’s long-term well-being. Bringing about development of the people, by the people, and for the people, and emphasizing that the goals of development are choices and freedoms.*

*-- Human development report website*

Global human development reports (HDRs) advanced the view that human development is about broadening people’s choices. Thereby, HDRs have shifted the development focus away from a growth-centred approach to a broader notion of development by addressing the multi-dimensional needs of people and empowering them to act in pursuit of fulfilling these capabilities. National human development reports (NHDRs) applied this global message to the national context.

Ever since its inception in 1992, the NHDR has been the main channel of UNDP dialogue with stakeholders in programme countries, particularly decision makers at the national/regional level and civil society organizations. Over 470 reports have been produced at the regional, national and sub-national levels.

Yet to this date, there has not been any systematic evaluation of the strategic relevance of NHDRs – either corporately or at the country level. Consequently, through a consultative process with headquarter units, initiated by a request from the Human Development Report Office, this evaluation was included in UNDP’s evaluation agenda.

Twenty countries have been chosen for in-depth study, with field studies to be conducted in 7 countries and in-depth desk reviews in 13 other countries. The study countries were chosen to represent diverse regional contexts with particular focus on illustrating salient features that characterize the diverse experiences of NHDRs – including the production processes, themes, dissemination strategies and overall influence in policy making and civil society networks.

This is a strategic, forward looking assessment that is expected to provide valuable lessons for UNDP Headquarters, country offices and NHDR teams around the world for improving the influence of future NHDRs in promoting human development (HD) approaches.



## Scope

To understand and assess the influence of NHDRs, it is necessary to study all reports produced thus far, as the conditions under which they were produced, the practices involved etc., have evolved and changed over time. Thus the country studies in Zimbabwe and Senegal will cover the entire period during which NHDRs were produced.

NHDRs shall be viewed as a system, rather than as a collection of individual reports. At the state/country level, this system involves the networks/partnerships established in the course of production as well as the dissemination of the reports to state organizations, academics, civil society organizations, donors etc.

The *production processes* covered by the assessment include selection of theme and writing team; peer review and other quality assurance mechanisms; consultation processes with civil society, relevant government line ministries and statistical bodies; and ownership and authorship of the reports

The *dissemination processes* that the assessment focuses on include the launch of the report and ongoing activities to promote the key messages.

The *outputs and outcomes* considered will include changes in development policies, practices and priorities; innovative policy proposals; enhancing democratic space to advance development alternatives; strengthening networks of HD; raising awareness of HD approaches; influencing civil society thinking and capacity to advocate HD approaches; engendering other HD instruments; and strengthening the statistical capacity of the country to track human poverty.

## Key evaluation questions

To assess the strategic relevance and importance of the NHDR system to UNDP, this evaluation will be guided by three sets of questions:

1. How strategically relevant and necessary is the system of NHDRs to UNDP?
2. What differences have the NHDRs made (in terms of results and processes) at the corporate and at the country level? Are these consistent with HD approaches and are these changes sustainable?
3. What are the (corporate and country level) enabling conditions for NHDRs to contribute towards development effectiveness of programme countries? In other words, how effective are the corporate policies, priorities, incentives, guidance, etc. in supporting NHDRs?

## Evaluation criteria

As outlined in the methodological framework developed by the Evaluation Team (see Appendix), the performance of the NHDR system will be assessed in terms of the following:

- i) Relevance – in terms of the HD needs of the country
- ii) Effectiveness – in terms of influencing policy framework, intellectual approaches to HD, enhancing government and civil society capacity to formulate HD strategies, statistical capacity of the country etc.
- iii) Sustainability – in terms of promoting lasting changes

- iv) Efficiency – in terms of catalytic impact and mobilizing partnerships
- v) Creativity and innovativeness – in terms of generating new ideas and instruments to advance the ideals of HD

### **Approach and methodology**

The Terms of Reference for the global evaluation was prepared in consultation with the focus group at UNDP Headquarters, regional centres and members of the HDR-net. Based on this ToR and in consultation with UNDP Headquarters units, the evaluation team developed a detailed methodological framework and a work plan (see Annex).

These assessments will have a preparatory phase and an implementation phase. The preparatory phase will provide the team conducting the study with a map of available information on NHDRs in the country, and propose a work plan for the team and necessary refinements to the methodology in response to the country context.

#### *Preparatory phase: preliminary assessments at the country level*

Prior to country missions, a brief report will be prepared to adapt the methodological framework (see Appendix) to the country context. The report has two distinct purposes: the first is to map NHDR processes and outcomes in mission countries. The second is to propose an evaluation action plan for the country mission that identifies key informants, sources of information and data gaps, etc., and operationalizes the methodological framework.

#### *Implementation phase: in-depth studies*

Detailed country case studies will be carried out with logistical support from the Evaluation Office and UNDP country offices in Senegal and Zimbabwe. Field studies, interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries, focus group discussions and desk research will be used.

Each country-level study should provide the means to assess the questions posed in the methodological framework (see Appendix).

### **Country mission evaluation team**

The evaluation team for the study shall comprise of a Mission Leader and a National Consultant working in close collaboration with the Task Manager.

### **Tasks**

As outlined in the Approach section, the tasks of the Consultant include:

- i) Preparing a work plan for the evaluation team
- ii) Participating fully in the evaluation mission as an evaluator
- iii) Providing substantive contributions to the Mission Leader to help write the country assessment report

### **Outputs and deliverables**

#### *1. Adapting the methodology for the assessment of NHDRs to the country context*

Based on the methodological framework proposed by the evaluation team, the following will be developed:

- a) Indicators for performance assessment:* A set of country-specific indicators.
- b) Design and implementation of surveys:* Identify and design necessary surveys to be conducted to obtain viewpoints on the influence of NHDRs from key stakeholders and

beneficiaries, including: UNDP officials, country team that produced the NHDRs, decision makers, line-agency officials, local officials, participating civil society organizations and academics in the programme country country/region.

## *2. Preliminary assessment of the NHDR system in mission countries*

In close collaboration with the UNDP Evaluation Office and UNDP country offices, a desk review will be conducted to map the existing NHDRs in mission countries and provide an evaluation action plan for the mission. To this end, the desk research will include, but is not restricted to:

- i) Country context as analysed in the CCF/UNDAF and in terms of receptiveness to HD approaches, civil society mobilization and participation, state of public debates on the development agenda etc.
- ii) History of NHDRs, the origins and motivations of the reports, themes addressed, changes in incentives and quality assurance.
- iii) Processes followed in conceiving, authoring and disseminating the report.
- iv) Mapping of outcomes in the policy arena, intellectual thinking, government and civil society capacity, and statistical capacity.
- v) Possible evaluation instruments and indicators that help adapt the methodology to the country context.
- vi) Identification of key informants, sources of information and data gaps.

In order to contextualize the NHDRs within the activities of UNDP, the report should familiarize readers with the relevant UNDP/UN documents, such as Country Programme Documents, Project Documents, etc.

## *3. Contributions to the evaluation mission and field work*

As a member of the evaluation team, the National Consultant will participate fully in the planning and implementation of the field studies, interviews, desk reviews and consultations and is expected to make substantive contributions to the overall exercise. The National Consultant will play an important role in identifying key stakeholders, informants and beneficiaries and will ensure that the orientation of the exercise is appropriate to the country context.

## *4. Support to the Principal Consultant to write the Country Report*

Upon completion of the country mission, the National Consultant shall assist the Mission Leader in preparing the Country Assessment Report. The Report shall highlight the country context as well as the issues and challenges faced by the NHDR system and shall be gender sensitive. The report will assess the performance of the NHDR system in the country based on the outcomes and a detailed narration of the evaluation instruments and indicators used. This report shall comply with the UNEG standards for Evaluation Reports and must present, among other things, findings supported by evidence and clear recommendations.

Evaluation Office  
June 2005.

**Addendum I**  
**Methodological Framework**  
**Assessment of the National Human Development Reports**  
**Evaluation Team**  
**May 2005**

**Background to the evaluation**

Ever since their inception in 1992, national human development reports (NHDRs) have been one of the main channels of UNDP dialogue with stakeholders in programme countries, particularly decision makers at the national/regional level and civil society organizations. Over 470 reports have been produced at the regional, national and sub-national levels. Quality and ownership of the reports vary widely.

Yet to this date, there has not been any systematic evaluation of the strategic relevance of the NHDRs, either corporately or at the country level. Consequently, through a consultative process with Headquarter units, initiated by a request from the Human Development Report Office, this evaluation was included in UNDP's evaluation agenda.

This is a strategic, forward-looking assessment that is expected to provide valuable lessons for the production and dissemination of NHDRs globally. To do so, it shall address the following three questions:

1. How strategically relevant and necessary is the system of NHDRs to UNDP?
2. What differences have the NHDRs made (in terms of results and processes; short-term as well as longer-term) at the corporate and at the country level?
3. What are the (corporate and country level) enabling conditions for NHDRs to contribute towards development effectiveness of programme countries?

**Proposed scope and methods of the study**

1. The study will provide:

a) A brief assessment of the state of the NHDR process as a whole, based on the 'survey of the universe'.

b) An in-depth assessment of the NHDR process and its impacts in 15 selected countries (three countries per region), with more in-depth study of five countries through country visits (10 days per country) and 10 countries studied through desk review and some interviews (five days per country)

c) An assessment of the NHDR's influence on UNDP policies and programming, both at the country and at the corporate level.

d) Recommendations regarding UNDP corporate strategy on NHDRs in light of the survey and the country studies (it will *not* attempt to provide an overall assessment of UNDP corporate strategy in relation to the NHDR).

2. The study will be conducted mainly through interviews (individuals and groups, both at Headquarters and in the countries being studied) and textual analysis. It is believed that any large-scale beneficiary surveys will not be feasible, given the resource constraints.

## **Framing questions**

1. What is expected of the NHDR by the UNDP? Are these expectations realistic? Are these expectations important to UNDP's overall mission?
2. How does the UNDP see the role of the NHDR as an advocacy tool, given other alternatives (e.g. Millennium Development Goal Report, participation in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process, advocacy with no regular report of any kind)?
3. What do the producers of the NHDR aim to achieve through it?
  - raising awareness on HD issues
  - expanding the horizon of policy debate to encompass HD issues
  - contributing to consensus building
  - expanding HD-oriented policy networks
  - enhancing democratic space
  - expanding innovative policy proposals
  - changing policies
4. What has actually been achieved?
5. Are the achievements relevant for HD in the country concerned?
6. Are the achievements sustainable?

## **Methodological problems**

Evaluating any effort is difficult. However, evaluating an intellectual/political project like the NHDR poses even greater challenges than evaluating material projects (such as building a dam or distributing free milk to poor children in schools). Two aspects stand out:

### **1. Identifying the reference groups**

Material projects tend to have relatively easily identifiable reference groups because of their 'specificity' in policy targets. This specificity may be in terms of geographical location (e.g., dams, roads) but could also be in terms of the location in the socio-economic system (e.g., microcredit for poor women, free milk for poor children in schools).

Intellectual/political projects are usually less specific and thus have less clearly identifiable reference groups. In the most extreme case, the reference group of an intellectual project can be humanity as a whole. For example, a book about human rights, democracy, or the virtues of the market can potentially affect everyone in the world (although the early advocates of ideas like democracy and freedom did not think their ideas applied beyond property-owning white males). In contrast, not even the biggest dams are meant to affect everyone in the world and not even the most ambitious social spending programmes target everyone in the world.

Of course, the difference should not be exaggerated. Not all intellectual/political projects see the entire humanity as their reference group. After all, the NHDR exercise deliberately restricts its reference group to sub-groups of humanity, such as a nation, a collection of nations (regional HDRs), or sub-national regions (e.g., state-level HDRs in India

or Brazil). At the same time, for some material projects, the reference groups may not be easy to identify. For example, we may not fully understand the complexity in the environmental system, in which case it will be difficult to assess the relevant reference groups for, say, a dam.

## **2. Identifying the production function**

For material projects, the ‘production function’ is relatively easy to identify. For example, we use earth-moving equipment, cement, asphalt, etc. to build a road, which then affects people’s income by changing the way they sell and buy goods and services, and by affecting the costs of their commute or even migration. When we buy milk and distribute it to poor children in school, we have a pretty good idea of how it is going to help their nutrition and growth.

When it comes to an intellectual/political project, the inputs may be relatively easy to identify. For example, the UNDP office in Nepal spends, say, \$100,000 to commission research for the NHDR, pay the team that writes the report, print and distribute the report, and to hold press conferences, etc. But what are the outputs?

The most immediate output is, of course, the report, but that is still only an ‘intermediate input’ in the sense that there are, and there are meant to be, further repercussions. It is these repercussions that are difficult to identify.

The report can, or at least is expected to, yield net benefits by changing specific policies that it had deliberately targeted. So, for example, an NHDR may criticize the primary education programme in a country for its failure to, say, cover children in urban slums. This criticism may change the education policy so that the access of children in urban slums to primary education is improved. This is relatively simple to understand.

However, there are often elements in the ‘production function’ of intellectual/political projects that are poorly understood. For example, an NHDR may criticize a country’s policy towards minority group rights and thus affect the way in which these groups are treated, which is the ‘intended’ outcome. The ‘output’ of this project, however, may not stop there. The report (and the debates surrounding it) could change the national discourse on human rights in general, and thus affect the contents of future economic, political and social policies, in which case the final ‘output’ would be much bigger than originally intended.

The key difficulty here is that it is almost impossible to know the shape of the ‘production function’ involved in an intellectual/political project. An NHDR that is intellectually strong may not produce any change in national policy discourse. This could happen for several reasons. For example, the report may be deliberately ignored by the media for ideological reasons. Or the report may get buried by some other big event (a number of good books were killed by 9-11 in 2001). On the other hand, an intellectually poor report may produce a significant change because it has, for example, a catchy phrase or because the production team conducted a strong publicity campaign. Also, the intellectual impact may be felt after a significant time lag. A forgotten report may be revived and have an impact later because the issue it covered suddenly becomes contentious. The impact may be even more indirect. A young scholar may change her outlook because of a particular NHDR that she

reads, and years later she may produce an influential policy document, by which time she may have forgotten that the report influenced her.

**Background information (information needed for the ‘survey of the universe’ is highlighted in bold typeface)**

1. **When did the report start?**
2. **At whose initiative was it started?**
3. **How many reports have been produced? In which years were they produced?** If the production was infrequent, why? Is this a reflection of the low influence of the NHDR?
4. **What are the issues that have been covered?** If some issues have been covered more frequently and/or more in-depth, why?
5. **Has there been any attempt to build ‘supplementary’ indexes in addition to the straightforward HDIs? If so, which ones?** What were the difficulties encountered in the process?
6. Who has led the production and dissemination processes? Has there been any change in the leadership?
7. **How much does an average NHDR cost? Who has financed the NHDR?** Has there been any change in the financing pattern?
8. What has been the relationship with UNDP Headquarters, Regional Bureaux, Human Development Report Office and other UN agencies in the process?
9. **What is the relationship of the NHDR to Millennium Development Goals Reports and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers?**
10. **Who are the main partners in the dissemination/campaign process?** Has there been any change in the partnership pattern?
11. **What is the support network (domestic, regional, international)?**

## **Assessment of NHDR's strategic position**

1. What is the relationship between the country government and the UNDP country office, and with the UN as a whole? How relevant is this relationship in understanding the role of NHDR? What constraints and opportunities result from the UNDP being a UN organization?
2. What are the main political constraints/opportunities?
  - a) Political landscape – is it a democracy? What is the party influence on policy debate? How free is it to debate policy (not the same as being a democracy)?
  - b) Who controls the media? (government? private capital?)
  - c) What are the influences of the Bretton Woods Institutions in policy-making? What are their relationships with the UNDP country offices?
  - d) What are the donor influences? What are their relationships to the UNDP country offices?
3. What is the role of the NHDR in public debate and policy making?
  - a) How influential has it been overall?
  - b) Are there particular areas in which it has been influential (e.g., social, political, technical, and organizational)?
  - c) Are there particular areas of the government where it has been influential?
  - d) Are there particular donors and other international agencies with whom it has been influential?
  - e) What are the relationships with civil society organizations and societal leaders?

## **The production process**

### *Report design*

We need to look at:

- a) themes/issues
- b) emphases
- c) structure
- d) definition of the target audiences and design of the report to suit them
- e) development of supplementary or alternative indexes

And in doing so we need to ask:

- a) What are the main principles that drive the process?
- b) Who participates?
- c) Who has the most influence and why?

### *Report writing*

- a) Who writes the report?
- b) How is the team created? (Who chooses the team? Is it multi-disciplinary? Is it broad-based?)
- c) What do the report team and its members expect? Do they have different expectations from that of the country office? If so, how does that affect the production process?
- d) Is there an attempt to build intellectual capacity in the process? (e.g. training, mentoring, etc.)
- e) What is the feedback mechanism? (advisory board, peer review, consultation with the target groups, draft circulation)



### *Constraints on the production process*

- a) Political (government, Bretton Woods Institutions, donors, Headquarters, local UN office, NGOs)
- b) Financial (does the shortage of money prevent recruitment of adequate consultants, data collection, presentational quality of the report? Does the financing pattern affect the independence of analysis?)
- c) Intellectual (how serious is the dominance of the Bretton Woods Institution paradigm? Is there a shortage of able consultants? Is there a data problem?)
- d) Social (e.g., social taboos)
- e) Country office capacity (does it lack financial and/or intellectual resources to lead the process?)
- f) Any innovative solutions to these problems?

### *Assessments*

#### Things to consider:

- a) relevance of the issues for HD
- b) quality of analysis
- c) independence of analysis
- d) quality of statistics
- e) quality of the dialogue process
- f) capacity building efforts and their successes
- g) development in the ability to ‘work around constraints’

### **The dissemination process**

#### *Process*

1. Launch event (how is it organized and who are invited?)
2. Short-term follow-up strategies
  - a) Seminars (government officials, press, academics, grass roots, NGOs)
  - b) Press follow-up (so it is not just a one-day event)
  - c) Grass roots dissemination (e.g., dialogue, parades, interaction with schools, etc.)
  - d) Other measures (e.g. web, posters, pamphlets, art competitions)
3. Long-term follow-up strategies
  - a) Continued policy dialogue with the government (institutionalized or personal?)
  - b) Continued campaign

#### *Constraints*

1. Political (government, those who control the media)
2. Financial
3. Intellectual (are there enough people who are disseminating the ideas?)
4. Social (e.g., social taboos)
5. Innovative solutions?

#### *Assessment*

1. Was there an explicit dissemination strategy?

2. Were there clear target audiences and have the dissemination strategies been specifically designed for them?
3. How was the budget allocated between production and dissemination?
4. What was the partnership in the dissemination process?
5. How effective was the dissemination process?

## **Influences**

1. Policy influences (policy changes)
2. Intellectual influences
  - (a) Changes in the terms of policy/intellectual debate?
  - (b) Influence on how policy-makers think (interview, textual analysis)
  - (c) Influence on academic research agenda (survey of academic publications, etc.)
  - (d) Influence on educational curricula (university programmes and courses, school textbooks, school teaching materials)
  - (e) Influence on popular perception (do 'ordinary people' view development any differently now?)
  - (f) Possible adverse influences from the use of indexes (e.g., indexes fail to incorporate broad political issues; focus on indexes diverts people's attention from real HD issues; indexes do not reflect distribution of income and other life opportunities)
3. Effects on network building. Has the NHDR process contributed to building durable policy and/or intellectual networks, both nationally and internationally, around the HD agenda?
4. Effects on capacity building
  - (a) intellectual (researcher development, data collection and processing ability)
  - (b) political (advocacy skills, dialogue skills)
5. Enhancement of the 'political space' (e.g. providing the space for people to discuss human development-related issues that are not easily discussed in public for political reasons)
6. Influences on UNDP corporate policy and programming





UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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