

11 July 2000

INDIA
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK
(UNDAF)

Executive Summary

1. The rationale
2. India's development challenges
3. UNDAF goals
4. Objectives of UNDAF
5. Areas for collaborative action
6. Programming options
7. Monitoring and evaluation
8. Summary of Action Plan

Boxes

1. Ongoing collaboration for greater efficiency
2. GOI-UN Education Programme - Joint Programme –Evolution of Partnerships
3. Elimination of Child Labour - Parallel Programme – Common Goals
4. Orissa Cyclone – UNDAF in Action - Action Synergy, Logistical Unification
5. UNAIDS – Joint Programme – Co-ordinated Response
6. Water and Environmental Sanitation Sector Co-ordination

Annex

UNDAF: The Process

Acronyms

APCTT	Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCA	Common Country Assessment
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GOI	Government of India
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Urban Management Programme)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

INDIA
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK
(UNDAF)

Executive Summary

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) - India has been developed as a framework for collaboration with the Government of India's development programmes. It is intended to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of UN operations by bringing about greater synergy in action. The development of the UNDAF is also meant to initiate a *strategic* process for forging critical partnerships and promoting public action for achieving key human development goals.

The Common Country Assessment carried out in 1999 draws attention to the many achievements as well as to the challenges facing India. The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) provides an effective framework for concerted action.

Goals and objectives of UNDAF

The UN system has a long history of co-operation with the Government of India. The Five-Year Plans provide the overall development framework within which priority areas of co-operation are identified jointly for UN system support. Even though financial assistance is relatively limited, the main contribution of the UN system has been in supporting innovative projects, in disseminating lessons learned for wider adoption, in supporting action research in critical areas of human development, and in advocating for change backed by documentation and public interaction.

The over-arching goals of the UN system in India are to (1) work towards the elimination of human poverty and inequalities, and (2) promote sustainable human development. Both these are consistent with the priorities spelt out in the country's Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), and with India's global commitments.

A series of steps were taken by the UN Country Team to narrow down the focus of collective UN action. The process of dialogue with Government and broad consultations with development partners helped identify two areas of key importance for India's future development: (i) promoting gender equality, and (ii) strengthening decentralisation. Both these challenges, besides being crosscutting in nature, were also seen to be crucial for the success of India's development efforts. At the same time, the two areas are also closely inter-related. Promoting gender equality is an important way of making decentralisation more effective.

The main objectives of promoting gender equality will be to:

- Enhance women's decision-making capability
- Promote equal opportunity
- Support policy changes

The main objectives of strengthening decentralisation will be to:

- Promote effective community management
- Strengthen local governance institutions
- Support effective devolution of power

Collaborative actions

For promoting gender equality:

- Develop a gender policy analysis framework
- Support a comprehensive gender-disaggregated data base
- Support to promote gender equality
- Assist in developing Gender-Sensitive State Plans
- Promote inter-agency action research on gender

For strengthening decentralisation:

- Joint planning and strategic development of projects based on common assessments and analysis
- Joint programmes for learning and capacity development including joint policy workshops and documentation of lessons learned from successful experiences of decentralisation
- Development of a common resource centre
- Reinforcement of decentralisation strategies in the Tenth Five-Year Plan

The UNDAF - Government Interface

The Planning Commission has been designated as the nodal point for UNDAF interaction. As a multi-sectoral wing of the Government of India that is in regular contact with State Governments, the Commission is uniquely placed to influence the setting of priorities at both the Centre and in the States. Gender and decentralisation are, by and large, state subjects under the Constitution and initiatives to address these challenges will be primarily concentrated at the state level.

The UN system will develop planning and strategic capacity support within the Resident Co-ordinator's Office for carrying out the activities envisaged under the UNDAF. This could include creating new Inter-Agency Working Groups or restructuring existing ones. UNDAF activities will be reviewed regularly by the UN Resident Co-ordinator.

Action Plan

Concrete steps will be taken to strengthen the capacity of the UN system, and this will include:

- Developing a database with a set of common indicators for common monitoring and evaluation
- Setting up of a UN India Intranet, with subsets of key data/information on the UN System-India website (www.un.org.in)
- Compiling a UN system catalogue of annual learning and training events which will include all the training available by each of the UN organisations to staff and partner organisations
- Mapping of best practices to improve programming and operations

Efforts will also be made to:

- Harmonise UN country programmes with that of the Government - in particular the Tenth Five-Year Plan
- Jointly discuss the results of mid-term reviews or evaluations, to identify areas of greater collaboration on gender and decentralisation
- Conduct a new mapping exercise to review progress on coverage and impact in the two priority areas
- Organise stakeholder workshops to review progress
- Initiate a process of monitoring the UNDAF process in order to improve its effectiveness

The implementation of this new process will continue through the formulation of new country programmes in 2002.

INDIA

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK

1. The rationale

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has been developed as a framework for assistance to the Government of India's development programmes. It is intended to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of UN operations by bringing about greater synergy in action. The development of the UNDAF is also meant to initiate a *strategic* process for forging critical partnerships and promoting public action for achieving key human development goals.

The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review Resolution of the General Assembly in 1998 validates India's selection as a pilot country for the development of UNDAF.¹ According to this document:

UNDAF should promote a country-driven, collaborative and coherent response by the UN system to achieve greater impact at the country level, fully consistent and in support of national priorities as expressed in the country strategy notes or relevant national development plans, as appropriate... UNDAF should be nationally driven and with the full agreement of the government.

The need for co-ordinated UN action is particularly important for India. Human development is accelerated when UN organisations, along with Government and civil society, concentrate their resources - human and financial - as well as their efforts towards the realisation of a set of clearly articulated goals.

In addition, such active collaboration is also likely to improve significantly the effectiveness of development strategies and public action.

The Common Country Assessment (CCA) carried out in 1999 draws attention to the many achievements and development challenges facing India. India has a well-established system of planning for development, and since the launch of the First Five-Year Plan in 1951, the focus has been on promoting growth with social justice and ensuring equality of opportunity. The planning process is backed by an impressive internal capacity for policy analysis and implementation, both within the government and outside. Apart from an extensive bureaucracy that administers development, there are also a number of research agencies and non-governmental organisations that participate actively in influencing and shaping public policy.

The CCA also discusses the nature of UN contributions in India. UN organisations have a long history of co-operation with the Government of India (GOI) spanning almost 50 years. The Five-Year Plans continue to provide the *comprehensive development framework* for UN organisations - and other multilateral and bilateral partners - to identify areas of collaboration and programme assistance. Much of the focus of the UN system in India has been on poverty eradication and promoting equality of opportunity - both prime goals articulated by India's Planning Commission.

¹ India played an important leadership role in the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution 53/192 on 15 December 1998 following the Comprehensive Triennial Policy Review.

Today, the presence of the United Nations system in India is the largest in the world. A number of UN organisations have their offices in India.² There are also other non-resident UN bodies such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) that contribute to the development process. Besides these, the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank, International Finance Corporation, and the International Monetary Fund) also carry out substantive development activities.

However, the UN's financial contribution to India's development remains very small. According to the 1999 Human Development Report, net official development assistance (ODA) received by India was only 0.4% of the country's GDP - less than half the average for developing countries (0.9% of combined GDP). In 1997-98, the share of multilateral assistance accounted for around 66% of total external assistance received by India. In 1997, per capita net ODA to India was US\$1.9 – significantly lower than the average of US\$9 for all developing countries – and US\$ 35 for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The UN system's contribution to India should not be measured only in terms of financial resources, but much more so in terms of collaborating to promote new ideas. Several innovative programmes have been developed jointly with the Government. Lessons learned are documented, analysed and shared, and often the pilot projects are scaled up nationally.

At the same time, the UN system and GOI have jointly identified and supported action research projects in critical areas of human development. UN supported technical assistance has also proved useful in a number of areas. The UN system has also worked closely with Government in tackling emergency situations especially those caused by natural calamities. Another important contribution has been the UN system's support to NGOs to highlight many areas of public neglect.

Given such a large presence and long history of co-operation, a co-ordinated effort of all UN organisations, working in close partnership with Government and civil society is bound to maximise the impact of the UN system in India.

² These include: Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT); Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO); International Labour Organisation (ILO); United Nations Centre for Human Settlements - Urban Management Programme (UNCHS); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); United Nations Volunteers (UNV); World Food Programme (WFP); and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In addition, UNAIDS is a co-sponsored programme of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, UNDCP and the World Bank.

2. India's development challenges³

India has achieved considerable success along several dimensions of human development since Independence in 1947. Distinctly visible are the significant expansion and diversification of production, made possible by the application of modern science and technology and the introduction of modern management. This has contributed to a steady and impressive growth in India's GDP. With the exception of 4 years, the country has recorded a positive growth rate in its GDP every year since 1950. Achievements have also been recorded in many spheres of social development. Life expectancy at birth has gone up from 32 years at the time of Independence to 61 years in 1998. The Crude Birth Rate (per thousand population) has fallen from 40.8 in 1951 to 26.4 in 1998. The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has increased from 10.4 % in 1971 to 44% in 1999. Since the 1960s, infant mortality has been halved to 71 deaths per 1000 live births in 1998. Remarkable progress has been achieved in immunising children, in providing access to safe drinking water, and in the control and eradication of guineaworm. In the field of education, the literacy rates went up from 18% to 52% between 1951-91. India has also established an excellent reputation in the field of higher education – in medicine, architecture, science and technology.

Significant changes have also taken place in other social spheres – with affirmative action for disadvantaged communities, and with women, by and large, enjoying more freedoms than ever before. India has grown and developed as the world's largest democracy with a vibrant electorate at all levels of society. Citizens enjoy considerable civil and political freedoms. Political participation and democracy were strengthened by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments creating new democratic institutions for local governance.

³ The Common Country Assessment (CCA) prepared by the UN system in 1999, draws on the framework provided by the Ninth Five - Year Plan and insights offered by various assessments, to discuss India's achievements in further detail.

The Constitutional Amendments ensure reservation of one-third of all seats for women. Another significant development has been the increasing participation and influence of non-governmental organisations in shaping policy and public action - particularly noticeable in the field of environment, child labour, community health, micro-credit, and women's empowerment. There has been a qualitative change in the nature of public discourse in India. The media, which enjoys considerable freedoms has played an increasingly visible role drawing attention to human deprivations and neglect.

Despite the many achievements, from a human development perspective, there is still much that needs to be done to end deprivations and ensure equality of opportunities. India's record in eliminating human poverty remains far from satisfactory. Income poverty declined from 54% in the mid-1970s to 36% in 1993-94. However, some 320 million people remain below the poverty line. The country has achieved near self-sufficiency in food production. Good systems of public distribution and competent administrative machinery have been able to successfully ward off starvation and famine deaths. Yet food insecurity persists, and close to 75 million children below five years of age remain undernourished. Most striking is the deprivation in basic education. More than an estimated 350 million people are illiterate, and female literacy rates remain particularly low. The persistence of child labour and the relatively high levels of maternal mortality, (related to lack of adequate reproductive health services) need to be addressed urgently. At the same time, there are a number of emergency situations that require attention. For instance, the rising number of HIV positive persons, estimated at around 3.5 million, requires urgent interventions that promote new partnerships and approaches besides addressing the social, legal, and cultural ramifications of the epidemic. Added to this are the increasing pressures on the environment, both in rural and urban areas, which are affecting the quality of people's lives.

Besides the low levels of overall human development, a striking feature of India's

development is the persistence of widespread disparities – across states, within states, between rural and urban areas, across communities, and between women and men.⁴ Women fare much worse than men on practically all indicators of human development. India is one of the few countries in the world where men outnumber women – reflecting the outcomes of persistent anti-female biases and gender discrimination. The neglect of women's well-being is most noticeable in the areas of health, basic education, and political participation. For instance, the high rates of maternal mortality in India, accounting for one-fifth of all global maternal deaths, reflect, to a large extent, inadequacies in the provisioning of basic reproductive health care. Almost 30% of babies born are of low birth weight reflecting once again the poor nutritional status of mothers, inadequate access to food and health care, and inadequate care of infants. Female literacy rates in some regions are among the lowest in the world, and school drop-out rates are consistently higher among girls than among boys.

India today, faces the twin challenges of accelerating and sustaining economic growth, and simultaneously, ensuring the elimination of human deprivations and inequalities. Priority needs to be assigned to the quality of growth, to ensure that its benefits are equitably distributed. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that the growth process promotes employment among the poorest, increases the reach of basic social services and contributes to regenerating the country's environmental resources, and is inclusive and participatory. Alongside, efforts to enhance human capabilities, especially among the poor need to be streamlined and strengthened.

Clearly, multiple interventions are needed to address the many challenges that India faces. The Ninth Five-Year Plan provides an effective framework for concerted action. A series of steps were taken by the UN Country Team to narrow down the focus of collective UN action,

⁴For a more comprehensive discussion, see UNDP, *Diversity and Disparities in Human Development: Key Challenges for India*, 1999.

keeping in mind the challenges that the country faces and the opportunities that exist for the UN system to make a meaningful contribution. Discussions were held with a wide cross-section of development partners and professionals, scholars, politicians, policymakers, activists and representatives of civil society. The process of dialogue with Government and broad consultations helped identify two areas of key strategic importance for India's future development: (i) promoting gender equality, and (ii) strengthening decentralisation. Both these challenges, besides being crosscutting in nature, were also seen to be crucial for the success of India's development efforts. At the same time, the two areas are also closely inter-related. Promoting gender equality is an important way of making decentralisation more effective.

Promoting gender equality

Persistent gender inequalities are among the most serious forms of social injustice. Many forms of discrimination tend to go unnoticed, and often existing patterns of social arrangements nurture anti-female bias and discrimination against young girls and women that deny them freedoms. There are many instances of progress in terms of greater gender equity, but gender inequality still persists.

Enhancing women's capabilities is important as an end in itself. At the same time, promoting opportunities for women – economic, social and political - and reducing gender inequality has enormous instrumental significance. These are direct means of empowering women, of enabling them to make informed choices, and of increasing participation in decision-making both within the family and at the community, state and national level.

The Constitution of India calls for equal treatment of women and men. The commitment to fulfil this Constitutional obligation has been re-affirmed several times by the State in national policy documents as well as at global forums. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by India in 1993, provides an additional framework of rights within which to address the

issue of gender equality. India's Ninth Five-Year Plan lists the empowerment of women as one of its principal objectives. However, eliminating gender inequalities is not an easy challenge. Many factors lie behind the persistence of anti-female bias and gender inequalities in India. These include, for instance, strongly entrenched patriarchal values, the neglect of women's concerns, imbalances in gender relations, lack of control over reproduction and a corresponding lack of male responsibility, unequal access to and control over resources, and above all, the systematic denial of women's freedoms.

Promoting gender equality calls for sensitive programming. But it also requires collective action at a different level – to highlight and recognise many silent forms of discrimination against women, to expose hidden biases, to initiate a broader public discussion and debate, to design new and innovative approaches, and ultimately to help change mindsets and societal values. A preliminary brainstorming between representatives of Government, bilateral agencies, NGOs, independent scholars, and the UN system pointed to several issues that need to be addressed collectively. These included, for instance, the need to:

- expand economic opportunities for women
- strengthen the role of women in governance
- address the much-neglected area of violence against women and children
- effect changes in mindsets that perpetuate anti-female biases
- expand access to quality reproductive health services for women and especially adolescent girls
- demand better gender-disaggregated data for monitoring progress, and concentrate particularly on expanding opportunities for the girl child in the most disadvantaged communities.

Action in these areas will require concerted efforts to work with women as well as with men. It is in these areas that the UN system can jointly make a valuable contribution – by bringing Government, civil society

organisations, and people together.

Strengthening decentralisation

A collective UN focus on decentralisation is equally justified. Decentralisation is a process that deepens democracy by creating opportunities for people's participation in decisions that affect their lives. Given the heterogeneity within India, it is now clear that local solutions hold the key to addressing problems of human poverty. However, there cannot be sustainable human development without good government. Effective participation of people in local governance is important in order to get priorities right, expand coverage and improve the quality of basic social services, reduce wastage and improve efficiency. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments for institutionalising a system of democratic local governance provide the basis for greater people's participation in public decision making which is essential for accelerating human development. This calls for more effective social mobilisation, improved access to information, and greater sensitivity among development administrators. It also requires that the poor and disadvantaged groups have a voice in the setting of priorities and in the design of programmes. Efforts must be made to protect the rights of the least advantaged, and to ensure effective participation by all groups. Elected officials of local bodies need to be better informed, better aware of their rights and responsibilities, and more capable of taking decisions. At the same time, it is essential to set up proper systems of monitoring, reporting, accountability, transparency and efficiency in the use of resources.

Decentralisation of administrative responsibilities must go hand-in-hand with devolution of authority and with fiscal decentralisation. Flexible and locally appropriate institutions and systems are needed to address development concerns at different levels – within the community, at the district level, and at the State level. People's participation in decision-making at each level is important.

The main challenges emerging from stakeholder discussions were:

- Making local governance bodies more representative, effective and equity-oriented
- Developing local area planning systems that reflect the priorities of the community, particularly the poor
- Developing local capacity to enhance the quality and availability of basic social services
- Setting up monitoring and information-sharing systems to ensure that resources meant for development are used effectively
- Co-ordinating activities of civil society organisations and elected local bodies
- Strengthening operational capabilities of local bodies.

As a result of discussions with the Government of India, and also with representatives from civil society, including non-governmental organisations and research institutions, the UN system in India has chosen to support the Government of India's efforts in promoting gender equality and strengthening decentralisation.

3. UNDAF Goals

The overarching goals of the *UN system* in India are to (1) *work towards the elimination of human poverty and inequalities, and (2) promote sustainable human development*. Both the goals are consistent with national priorities spelt out in the country's Ninth Five - Year Plan, and with India's global commitments. The "Statement of Action to Eradicate Poverty" of the UN Administrative Committee on Co-ordination reiterating the UN's commitment to eradicate poverty offers yet another reference point.

The mandates of the UN development organisations operating in India support activities aimed at eliminating human poverty and promoting rapid human development. However, discussions during the UNDAF process indicated that there was a need to more

narrowly identify specific challenges that the UN system could collectively address. It was agreed that the common challenges ought to be cross-cutting in nature – not sector specific – and that they must simultaneously improve programmatic efficiency of UN agencies and contribute significantly to India's overall development process. As mentioned earlier, intensive dialogue led to the identification of two such challenges: ***promoting gender equality, and strengthening decentralisation***. Addressing these two challenges are the priority goals of UNDAF in India for the next three years. The goals are closely inter-related and complementary. Enhancing women's capabilities and promoting gender equality are ways of strengthening the process of decentralisation.

These are not to be exclusive goals of UN activity in India. Every UN organisation will continue to have further goals specific to its mandate. The pursuit of common UNDAF goals is intended to enhance the effectiveness of each organisation, and contribute strategically and significantly to India's priorities in the development process.

4. Objectives of UNDAF

Objectives have been spelt out for the two UNDAF goals of promoting gender equality and strengthening decentralisation.

For promoting gender equality

<p style="text-align: center;">PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY <i>Objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance women's decision-making capability• Promote equal opportunity• Support policy changes

Enhance women's decision-making capability

Women have been denied equal opportunities to participate fully and more actively in decision-making. The UN system shall collectively work to enhance women's capabilities, and promote effective participation of women especially in local governments. The focus of interventions will be in four broad areas: economic empowerment, political participation, education, nutrition and health, including reproductive health and increased male responsibility. .

Promote equal opportunity

Efforts to promote equal opportunity will focus particularly on institutionalised exclusion that hinders women's participation in decision-making processes and forums. The UN system should aim to facilitate and promote women's access to various institutions, including education and training institutes, and locally elected governing bodies. Efforts should also be made to remove barriers that restrict women's freedom to tap market opportunities.

Support policy changes

Ensuring equal rights for women and men is a Constitutional commitment that the UN system will support. Creating an enabling environment is critical for achieving the national goal of women's empowerment. This will require, among other things, addressing the marginalisation of gender issues in policy-making, and the under-reporting (and non-recognition) of women's economic contribution.

The UN system should work collectively towards reviewing and supporting policies, legislation, and supporting mechanisms that promote equal rights for women.

The collective effort of the UN system in promoting gender equality should contribute towards:

- a re-negotiation and consequent change of gender relations within the household and in the community (such as raising the age of marriage);

- addressing the issue of violence against women and children, including the practice of female foeticide;
- ensuring more equal access to and control over resources for women;
- promoting greater women's participation in market activities as well as in political institutions;
- initiating public discussion and dialogue on a broad range of policies and legislation that can bring about a proper balance of rights of men and women.

For strengthening decentralisation

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHENING DECENTRALISATION <i>Objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote effective community management• Strengthen local governance institutions• Support effective devolution of power

Promote effective community management

Effective community management especially at the local level is critical for improving the quality and cost effectiveness of basic social services. Community members who are aware of their needs and informed about the availability of resources are more capable of effective monitoring and ensuring accountability of the service providers.

Appropriate training and increasing the decision-making capabilities of community members are prerequisites for effective community management. It is equally important to ensure participation of all groups in the decision-making process. The UN system should make a special effort to ensure increased participation of the poor and the disadvantaged. In doing so, it will be critical for the UN system to work in close collaboration with local governments and civil society organisations.

Strengthen local governance institutions

The success of the decentralisation process will depend upon the efficiency of local governance institutions. Capacity building of local governance institutions and the empowerment of all community members (particularly the disadvantaged) are two important factors in this process. Strengthening local governance institutions requires developing decision-making skills among members, introducing more effective systems of monitoring, creating transparency, ensuring full participation, and strengthening accountability.

Support effective devolution of power

Decentralisation creates opportunities for people to participate in decisions that affect their lives. However, community-driven processes that ensure effective devolution of power to local authorities are essential for ensuring effective decentralisation. At the same time, supporting policies and legislation that protect and promote the rights of local communities to participate in the processes are essential. Appropriate Constitutional amendments and legislation create an enabling environment. But strong support is needed to make these amendments and legislation effective. Increasing public awareness, instilling a healthy respect for democracy, ensuring availability of financial and administrative resources at the local level, and ensuring full participation of all groups in the development process are priorities.

The collective effort of the UN system in strengthening decentralisation should contribute towards:

- promoting greater participation in decision-making processes of the least advantaged;
- enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery as a result of community management;
- ensuring more transparency and accountability of local governments' and of UN assisted government programmes;
- ensuring the effective participation of women in locally elected bodies, as called

for in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

5. Areas for collaborative action

Discussions within the UN system and with development partners have led to the identification of several areas for collaborative action in order to realise the UNDAF objectives.

For promoting gender equality

The following sets of actions are envisaged under UNDAF.

Collaborative action to promote gender equality

- Develop a gender policy analysis framework
- Support a comprehensive gender-disaggregated data base
- Support to promote gender equality
- Assist in developing Gender-Sensitive State Plans

Develop a gender policy analysis framework

Gender policy assessment provides a frame of reference within which policies, programmes, budgets and plans of UN organisations, the Government and NGOs could be assessed from a gender perspective. Such an assessment is intended to:

- identify gaps that could help stimulate project formulation in critical areas
- develop appropriate tools and indicators to measure gender discrimination in a participatory and culturally sensitive manner.
- develop a resource pack to assess outcomes at different levels.

It is proposed that a multi-disciplinary team involving members of the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Gender and other stakeholders (including Government and NGOs) will design the gender policy analysis framework, and support its applications.

Support a comprehensive gender-disaggregated data base

Efforts have been initiated by the UN system and the Government to collect more reliable and better quality gender-disaggregated data on human development processes and outcomes. The UN system will further augment these efforts to develop a comprehensive gender-disaggregated data base. This will entail:

- strengthening and extending existing data bases to include gender-disaggregation at the State and district levels; and wherever possible, at the community level
- supporting gender analysis of data
- encouraging the development and inclusion of new gender sensitive indicators

Efforts will also focus on:

- ensuring that the data-base can be used for planning and policy formulation
- making available programme-related data on the situation of women at the level where decisions are made (such as the *Panchayats* and *Nagarpalikas*⁵, in the Women's Cells located in state planning boards and central ministries, with the National Commission for Women, and the Planning Commission)
- making the data base more user-friendly and accessible to the public, press and electronic media, to researchers and activists, and to development practitioners who can influence public debate and policy.

Building on the work of the IAWG on Databases, the UNDAF process can catalyse the efforts of the UN system to maintain a comprehensive computerised data base on indicators necessary for monitoring gender and decentralisation issues. Such a comprehensive data base will be particularly useful for annual reporting on progress towards achieving the global and national human development goals.

⁵ Panchayats are rural local government institutions and Nagarpalikas are urban local government institutions.

Support to promote gender equality

Support that is well-timed and co-ordinated, reaches the many levels of Government, and stimulates public dialogue and discussion has a better chance of changing mind-sets with deep-seated views on gender. The multi-disciplinary team involving members of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender and other stakeholders will be entrusted with the task of developing and co-ordinating an effective strategy.

Assist in developing Gender-Sensitive State Plans

Special efforts are needed to ensure that the Tenth Five-Year Plan reflects the priorities being assigned to women's empowerment at all levels of Government. Efforts initiated under the Ninth Five-Year Plan to create a Women's Component Plan at both the state and central level to earmark funds for women-related sectors need to be assessed and reinforced.

Apart from earmarking funds, processes by which these funds are distributed and utilised need to be reviewed and streamlined. A gender budget approach should be developed and pursued in collaboration with the Planning Commission, to determine the impact of GOI's Annual Budgets, and those of the UN system. Such a gender budget approach could initially be introduced and tested in UN organisations.

Promote action research on gender

The UN system should augment its support for research on gender issues. Inter-agency operations research on gender (e.g. understanding changing community behaviour and attitudes, women's reproductive health needs and responses, women's access to basic services, etc.) can strengthen project planning and design, and the formulation of plans of operation. There is also a need to assimilate the findings and extract lessons for policy and programming from the many research studies that have already been undertaken.

For strengthening decentralisation

The following sets of actions are envisaged under UNDAF.

Collaborative action to strengthen decentralisation

- Joint planning and strategic development of projects based on common assessment and analysis
- Joint programmes for learning and capacity development including joint policy workshops and documentation of lessons learned from successful experiences of decentralisation
- Development of a common resource centre
- Reinforcement of decentralisation strategies in the Tenth Five Year

Joint planning and strategic development of projects based on common assessment and analysis

A mapping exercise on decentralisation and gender showed that many UN organisations were pursuing similar goals and using similar methods sometimes in the same geographic area. In most cases, the focus was also on the same population groups: women and children, the most economically disadvantaged and the most vulnerable.

UNDAF should provide an opportunity for greater synergy between the goals and actions of UN organisations through information-sharing (to avoid duplication of efforts) and collaborative planning. Collaborative planning and strategic development of goals at the early stages should be followed up with joint reviews.

Over the next three years, UNDAF partners will address the common components that contribute to gender inequality or inhibit decentralisation. This discussion would include identification of geographic areas where multiple agency inputs would lead to a greater impact in districts with the worst social indicators in the country. The focus would be on (i) identifying areas *where ongoing programmes* could be brought together

for greater efficiency, (ii) discussing ways to continue and expand the mapping exercise to identify common activities, and (iii) developing plans for harmonised programme cycles.

This activity will be taken up by the various IAWGs as an extension of the mapping work that was done earlier in 1999. The results of the work will be shared on a regular basis with the UN Country Team. Recommendations will be discussed with the Planning Commission.

Joint programmes for learning and capacity development

Learning, training, and capacity development are components common to almost all development programmes. Each organisation tends to develop its own materials with government counterparts, trains and retrains field workers and community members. To a large extent, these efforts focus on similar participants, share a common approach emphasising the significance of participatory methods, and deal with similar content. There is much to gain by pooling this experience – and the experience of other NGOs, learning from successful collaborative efforts (for example in the case of the UNAIDS programme) and developing joint programmes for enhancing learning and capacity at different levels.

The IAWGs could be entrusted, over the next three years, to articulate a common goal, to develop a learning and training plan, and support training relating to gender and decentralisation, concentrating especially on enhancing the capabilities of the more vulnerable members of society.

Development of a joint resource centre

Access to reliable information and timely data is critical for effective governance. The flow of such information and access to new data will become even more important as local bodies begin to assume increasing responsibility for their development. The Inter Agency Working Group on Database, through the development of the DevInfo database provides an opportunity to access information disaggregated by gender.

It also seeks to make data available at the sub-national levels, namely at the level of districts and also at the sub-district level. The UN system will work towards developing this initiative into a joint resource centre that will offer public access to human development related data.

Reinforcement of decentralisation strategies in the Tenth Five Year Plan

The UN system must look ahead to the application of decentralisation strategies during the preparation of India's Tenth Five-Year Plan. Issues related to decentralisation are well and extensively articulated in the Ninth Plan. The role of UNDAF, therefore, is not so much to help integrate decentralisation strategies into the next planning cycle, rather to help ensure that the experience of decentralisation from the community level to the district level in the states (there is considerable inter-state variation) is recognised by those designing the next plan.

Of equal importance, however, is the role of the UN system working with the Planning Commission to ensure that gender and women's rights are seen as important elements in decentralisation, and are integrated into the Plan.

BOX 1

Ongoing collaboration for greater efficiency

Enhancing the efficiency of operations is a focus of inter-agency collaboration in India. Efforts are on to ensure full harmonisation of programme cycles among UN system organisations by the year 2002. Efforts will be made to ensure that UN country programmes are harmonised with the Government's Five-Year planning cycle. Synchronisation has already been initiated for the four UN funds and programmes – UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP.

New initiatives for sharing successful learning and training staff programmes will be introduced. Flexi-teams among organisations, informal in structure, are planned in order to promote better dialogue and discussion among the agencies.

Success in increasing operational efficiency has been achieved at the administrative level. Cost savings have resulted by collectively dealing with security, travel, courier services and cafeteria facilities. Areas identified for the future include:

- **Procurement:** (i) streamlining custom clearances through identification of common problems and solutions; (ii) creating a joint review process for issues relating to bidding, bulk procurement, quality control and after sales service; (iii) support for sales tax and service tax issues (a common tax consultant);
- **Learning and Training:** (i) selected briefing of new staff; (ii) common training modules; (iii) staff exchange for capacity building; (iv) development of learning materials;
- **Informatics:** (i) a common UN intranet; (ii) joint tele- and video- conferencing facilities

6. Programming options

There are a number of programming options for the implementation of the collaborative actions identified in the previous section. There are also several on-going examples of inter-agency collaboration.

BOX 2
GOI-UN EDUCATION PROGRAMME
JOINT PROGRAMME
EVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIPS

Five UN organisations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, and ILO), eight state governments and two departments of GOI (Education and Economic Affairs) jointly agreed to support on-going efforts of the GOI towards universalising primary education in India. Working together, a community based primary education programme was launched in mid 1998 that envisages the involvement of NGOs as well. This is the first collaborative UN effort to be jointly funded. The project cost of \$20 million is being met by contributions of \$8.7 million from UNDP, \$9 million from UNICEF, and \$2 million from UNFPA.

Highlights:

- Developed mutually acceptable procedures for implementation and financing within extant Government rules, procedures and practices
- Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Primary Education provided a forum for evolving programmes and procedures at the national level
- Organised a National Programme Management Unit to facilitate management and co-ordination on behalf of both the Government of India and the UN system.
- Supported local level preparation of plans that included community voices especially those of parents and children.

Mentioned below are some options that have been suggested by the UN Development Group in New York Headquarters.

Organisation Programme/Project

This option describes a programme or project resulting from a formulation process specific to one organisation and its counterpart agencies,

addressing a need identified through a collaborative assessment and strategic programme development process. Rationale, objectives, activities and outputs are described in one document, which includes a budget necessary to achieve the objectives. Such programmes and projects should nevertheless be responsive to the strategic objectives of the UNDAF in relation to gender and decentralisation and the document should provide clear statements to that effect.

BOX 3
ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR
PARALLEL PROGRAMME
COMMON GOALS

UN organisations with their nodal Ministries independently tackle the issue of child labour: ILO - *International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour* through education, social mobilisation and legal enforcement; UNICEF - *prevention of child labour through primary education*; UNDCP - *Programme for Street Children*; UNESCO - *Learning Without Frontiers (LWF)*; UNIFEM - *entrepreneurship development programme for women*; UNAIDS - *activities against child trafficking*; and UNDP - *South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme*.

Through dialogue, a parallel UN system approach was agreed upon. The first step: achieving consensus for a joint statement on child labour as presented in the UN system Position Paper. Subsequent strategies include:

- **Education:** focussing on compulsory primary education; improvements in formal education through infrastructure (teachers; physical facilities; supplies)
- **Legal Enforcement:** enforce existing child labour laws more effectively; sensitise the official machinery through training
- **Awareness generation and sensitisation:** of the community, institutions and Government
- **Social interventions:** Health care, nutrition, income and employment generation schemes, credit facilities, integrated poverty alleviation and community development services.

The IAWG on child labour will co-ordinate the UN system strategy.

Parallel Programmes/Projects

These are programmes or projects of two or more organisations derived from a common problem identification, as well as a shared overall strategy for concerted action. Activities are reflected by each organisation in self-reliant, comprehensive documents, which complement each other with specific reference to one another. The monitoring and evaluation of parallel programmes is done jointly by the participating organisations.

BOX 4

ORISSA CYCLONE

UNDAF in ACTION – ACTION SYNERGY, LOGISTICAL UNIFICATION

A super cyclone hit the state of Orissa on 29 October 1999. It affected 12 million people -- damaging 1.82 million houses, destroying 1.81 million hectares of crops, and killing close to 10,000 people.

The United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT), consisting of FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV, ILO, WFP and WHO, convened an emergency meeting on 1 November 1999; specific roles were assigned to each of the Organisations.

- UNDP: convening DMT meetings; co-ordinating activities of various Organisations; focal point for interaction with the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.
- UNICEF: procuring relief items; focal point for interaction with bilateral missions in India. The UNICEF State Office in Orissa became a UN House on the ground to facilitate the operations of other organisations in response to the cyclone.
- WFP: procuring relief items; focal point for interaction with NGOs; lead role in implementing the food-for-work programme during the rehabilitation phase.

Specialised agencies and bodies such as FAO, WHO, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA are involved in providing technical expertise in their areas of operations, along with other UN organisations in developing specific rehabilitation strategies to be implemented by the UN system by accelerating the existing programmes and by augmenting the special resources available for rehabilitation activities.

BOX 5

UNAIDS JOINT PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE

Seven co-sponsors established a joint UN Programme in 1996 within areas of comparative advantage. UNAIDS has been charged to bring about better co-ordination among UN co-sponsors and development partners, not only across the UN Development Group (UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF), but Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank) and Specialised Organisations (WHO, UNESCO, and UNDCP). At the same time UNAIDS seeks to consciously avoid creating a separate and parallel structure to achieve these goals. It brings to UNDAF the experience of developing a common programmatic framework to which all stakeholders provide inputs.

Highlights:

- 'Theme Groups' as a new form of joint programme governance with the active participation of government and major bilateral agencies (USAID, DFID, AUSAID, CIDA) and other UN agencies (ILO and UNIFEM)
- Forum for ongoing technical dialogue in support of the national programme and common programme framework based on a 'shared vision'
- Experience with working towards an integrated UN work plan
- 'Virtual team' concept as a path-breaking approach to inter-organisation work across the UN system
- Offers a negotiating platform based on technical expertise rather than funds
- Underlines the importance of a strong national policy and programme framework as the most important determinant of success.

Joint Programme/Project

Finally, joint programming is the development of a single programme or project by two or more organisations resulting from a joint programming process. Within the context of approved country programmes and signed agreements, the programme is outlined in a single document, which describes the linkages between and responsibilities of all participating organisations. Funding mechanisms will respond to the accountability needs of participating organisations.

BOX 6
WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SANITATION - SECTOR COORDINATION

The UN IAWG on Water and Environmental Sanitation was formed in April 1996 as a co-ordinating platform for consensus and convergence among sector partners. The purpose is to promote common principles and focus actions for sustainable water management and use, to mobilise additional resources, and promote a common understanding of water and sanitation-related issues among the public and national and international partners. It is composed of Core group members, (UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, FAO, the World Bank and the Water & Sanitation Programme – South Asia) and the Sector Co-ordination Group on Water and Sanitation that includes GOI, UN organisations, bilateral donors, private sector and NGOs. The key objective of the Sector Co-ordination Group is to support policy reforms initiatives required for the water sector. The group has had three sector consultation meetings.

Highlights:

- Dissemination of best practice studies
- An alternative arrangement for collaborative programming around a common theme.
- Organisations maintain their identity and continue implementing their planned programmes
- Interactions stimulate new concepts and approaches.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Efforts are on to identify the support that is needed, both at the country level and from UN Headquarters, for the implementation of UNDAF.

The UN system will develop planning and strategic capacity support within the Resident Co-ordinator's Office for carrying out the activities envisaged under the UNDAF. This could include creating a new Inter Agency Working Group or restructuring existing ones as mechanisms for the implementation of the UNDAF. UNDAF activities will be reviewed regularly by the UN Resident Co-ordinator.

The Planning Commission has been designated as the nodal point for UNDAF interaction. As a multi-sectoral wing of the Government of India that is in regular contact with State Governments, the Commission is uniquely placed to influence priorities at both the Centre and in the States. Gender and decentralisation are, by and large, state subjects under the Constitution and initiatives to address these challenges will be primarily concentrated at the state level.

Outcome and output indicators for monitoring and evaluating both process and content will be identified for the two UNDAF focus areas.

The UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Database is developing a common UN System Database to be used to follow-up on the progress in India on CCA indicators and on the follow-up to UN Global Conferences and Summits as part of the UNDAF process. This group will continue to work to expand this database to include UNDAF indicators and other indicators used or produced by UN organisations and their partners.

8. Summary of Action Plan

Over the next three years, the UNDAF process will work towards promoting gender equality and strengthening decentralisation – both seen as vital for improving the effectiveness of UN operations as well as for accelerating India's human development.

More specifically, the objectives of promoting gender equality will be to:

- Enhance women's decision-making capability
- Promote equal opportunity
- Support policy changes

And the objectives of strengthening decentralisation will be to:

- Promote effective community management
- Strengthen local governance institutions
- Support effective devolution of power

Collaborative action to promote gender equality will include:

- Develop a gender policy analysis framework
- Support a comprehensive gender-disaggregated data base
- Support to promote gender equality
- Assist in developing Gender-Sensitive State Plans
- Promote inter-agency⁶ action research on gender

Collaborative action to strengthen decentralisation will include:

- Joint planning and strategic development of projects based on common assessment and analysis
- Joint programmes for learning and capacity development including joint policy workshops and documentation of lessons learned from successful experiences of decentralisation
- Development of a common resource centre
- Reinforcement of decentralisation strategies in the Tenth Five-Year Plan.

Concrete steps will be taken to strengthen the capacity of the UN system, and this will include:

- Developing a database with a set of common indicators for common monitoring and evaluation

- Setting up of a UN India Intranet, with subsets of key data/information on the UN System-India website (www.un.org.in). Compiling a UN system catalogue of annual learning and training events which will include all the training available by each of the UN organisations to staff and partner organisations
- A mapping of best practices to improve programming and operations

Efforts will also be made to:

- harmonise UN country programmes with that of the Government - in particular the Tenth Five-Year Plan
- jointly discuss the results of mid-term reviews or evaluations, to identify areas of greater collaboration on gender and decentralisation.
- Conduct a new mapping exercise to review progress on coverage and impact in the two priority areas.
- Organise stakeholder workshops to review progress
- Initiate a mechanism for monitoring the UNDAF process in order to improve its effectiveness.

The implementation of this new process will continue through the formulation of India's next Five-Year Plan and the new UN country programmes in 2002.

⁶ At present, there are ten IAWGs in India working on different themes – Child Labour, Data Base (DevInfo), Disaster Management, Education, Food Security and Nutrition, Gender and Development, HIV/AIDS, Population and Development, Primary Education, and Water and Environmental Sanitation. An IAWG on decentralisation is proposed.

Annex

UNDAF: THE PROCESS

December 1997	UNDAF Task force set up. India is selected as one of the 18 UNDAF Pilot Phase Countries. Suggested work plan is approved by Heads of Agencies.
March 1998	One-day Workshop on <i>Development Challenges</i> . The workshop sought to get the views of a mix of different level UN programme staff on the implications of UN reform, and to provide a forum for staff to voice their hopes and fears about the changes to be brought about by the CCA/UNDAF exercise. The participants examined India's development challenges sector-wise: Basic Education, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, Environment and Water, Employment, and HIV/AIDS.
May 1998	UNDAF Focal Points for UN organisations nominated.
June 1998	One-day workshop on CCA. The workshop involved Heads and Deputies of UN organisations in India and sought to examine India's development challenges through crosscutting perspectives of Basic Social Services, Decentralisation, Gender, Human Rights, Partnerships, Poverty and Sustainability. The participatory 'small group' and 'market stalls' methodology used succeeded in the objective of UNDAF teambuilding and ownership.
August 1998	UNDAF Assessment Mission from UN Development Group Office. The mission sought to evaluate the design and management of the UNDAF process in India and to suggest possible improvements
December 1998	Inter-Ministerial Meeting convened by Ministry of Finance brought together UN organisations and their nodal ministry counterparts around the table to discuss the issues and the possible role of the UN in tackling them
February 1999	Future Search Workshop, "How can the UN system best support India's development future?" UN system stakeholder/partners (resident UN organisations, non-resident UN organisations, government, donors and civil society organisations) used 'Future Search Methodology' to examine trends affecting India's development and marked those that were considered most important. Further discussions took place around the role the UN could play and the actions the UN could assist the country with, to ensure progress on selected development issues. Two focus areas (gender and decentralisation) for collaborative UN efforts in the next few years were agreed upon for UNDAF-India 1999-2003.
March 1999	Drafting of CCA (and UNDAF) Outline(s) by the UNDAF Drafting Group/UNDAF Task Force in informal consultation with the Planning Commission, (selected line ministries), selected donor and civil society partners.
August 1999	Task Force interaction with Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen on UNDAF themes.
October 1999	UN Day exhibition on how the UN system is working together on gender and decentralisation.
December 1999	Draft UNDAF document presented to the Secretary, Planning Commission.
January 2000	Follow-Up to the Inter-Ministerial meeting and the Future Search Workshop held to discuss the UNDAF draft and suggest improvements.
January 2000	Presentation on UNDAF-India to the Joint Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF with WFP in New York