



*Empowered lives.
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EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (2008-2013)

Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme



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FOREWORD

The United Nations Development Programme, in addition to supporting the development of 177 countries and territories through its country and multi-country programmes, runs global and regional programmes to address issues of global and regional nature, provide coherence to its technical support and facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience across the countries it serves.

During 2012, the Evaluation Office conducted a series of evaluations of these global and regional programmes. This evaluation covered the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008-2013, implemented by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, through its Panama Regional Service Centre. It examined the contributions made to development results through the implementation of regional projects, activities and the complementary technical support services provided to country offices and other national or regional partners.

The evaluation found that UNDP has made relevant contributions to the development outcomes planned in the regional programme and to national development in the region. The regional programme now needs to focus on fewer and more realistic thematic priorities and more strictly prioritize initiatives in which UNDP brings a regional added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic partners able to support countries or regional institutions in taking ownership to ensure the continuity and sustainability of results.

The added value and comparative advantages of the regional programme lie in its upstream work to facilitate regional and thematic networking, enhance cross-regional knowledge management, facilitate the transfer of South-South solutions,

and engage stakeholders in sensitive topics. The regional programme should be less involved in project implementation and should invest its limited resources on upstream initiatives such as: policy and technical advice; advocacy; dialogue; partnership building; multistakeholder coordination; networking; knowledge brokering; and capacity development.

The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation and the promotion and development of South-South solutions. UNDP should rethink how the regional programme can more strategically and more realistically support triangular and South-South cooperation and measure the concrete effects and sustainability of those initiatives in a more systematic manner. UNDP should also rethink its approach to the Caribbean and should develop a new development cooperation strategy with an adequate resource mobilization plan to allow UNDP to tackle the specific challenges, needs, priorities and opportunities of the Caribbean countries and the different development status and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, net contributor countries and middle-income countries.

As UNDP prepares to develop a new Strategic Plan, I hope this series of evaluations will shed light on how UNDP can further enhance the value of its services by utilizing these global and regional programme instruments more effectively and efficiently.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director, Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Assessment of Development Results
AECID	<i>Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo</i>
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
BOM	Bureau of Management (UNDP)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CELAC	Community of Latin American States
CEPREDENAC	<i>Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de Desastres Naturales en América Central</i>
CRMI	Caribbean Risk Management Initiative
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSW	Commercial sex worker
DGTTF	Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EO	Evaluation Office (UNDP)
FSID	Fiscal Schemes for Inclusive Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPECS	Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support in Latin America
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IFF	Investment and financial flows
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex
LIC	Low-income country
LCF	Leverage of Carbon Finance for Sustainable Development
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (under UNFCCC)
MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework
MARP	Most At-Risk Populations
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreements
MIC	Middle-income country
MROL	MDG Reports Observatory for LAC
MSM	Men who have sex with men
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAC	National AIDS Committee
NCC	Net Contributing Countries

OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PACDE	Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness
PAPEP	Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project
PLHIV	People living with HIV
POLSEPAZ	Costa Rica National Policy on Citizen Security and Peace
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP)
RCF	Regional Cooperation Framework
REDCA	Central American Network of People Living with HIV
REDD	Reduction of Emissions due to Forest Degradation and Deforestation
REDLACTRANS	Latin America and the Caribbean Network of Transgender People
RPD	Regional Programme Document
RSC	Regional Service Centre
SICA	<i>Sistema de Integración Centroamericana</i>
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TRAALOG	Transparency and Accountability in Local Governments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, as part of its annual work plan approved by the Executive Board, the Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted regional programme evaluations for all five UNDP regions as well as a global programme evaluation. The present document is the evaluation of the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC).

The regional programme evaluation is an independent programmatic evaluation conducted to support the accountability function of the Administrator in reporting to the Executive Board; to facilitate learning, so as to inform current and future programming at the regional and institutional levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the regional programme to be approved in 2013; and to provide development partners and stakeholders in programme countries with an objective assessment of the development contributions achieved through UNDP support and with partners collaborating in the regional programme.

This is the second evaluation conducted for the Latin America and the Caribbean region and covers the 2008-2013 programme period. The evaluation takes into account changes made over time by RBLAC, which has chosen four areas of strategic importance to the region as its primary focus: poverty and inequality reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); democratic governance; crisis prevention and recovery (CPR); and energy and the environment. A different set of operational modalities used by the Panama Regional Service Centre for delivering its regional programme were examined, namely, provision of technical advisory services; implementation of regional projects; capacity assessment and development contributions; promotion of South-South solutions; and

the management and sharing of knowledge and lessons. The evaluation assessed UNDP programme performance, guided by the results and resources framework in the regional programme document. The contribution of the programme to development outcomes was assessed according to a set of evaluation criteria used across all regional programme evaluations: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

The evaluation was conducted using a combination of desk reviews, field visits to nine selected countries, and interviews with various stakeholders. The country office survey, which was developed and administered jointly by all five regional programme evaluations and the global programme evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office, was administered to obtain critical insights into the regional programme operation from UNDP country offices.

II. BACKGROUND

The Latin America and Caribbean region comprises 33 countries and dependent territories. The regional bureau oversees 24 UNDP country offices, five of which are in the English and French-speaking Caribbean and two in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Seven offices are in the area classified as Mesoamerica (including Mexico), five are in the Andean area, and five are in the area classified as the Southern Cone.

In 2008, when the programme was initiated, the region was benefiting, for the most part, from a positive economic upturn. An important development trend was the linking of national and global markets, enabling the participation of the poorest and ensuring that they benefit from globalization. Those excluded from the advantages of global opportunities experienced increased income inequality.

In 2012, the reduction of inequality remained the key challenge of the region. Of the 15 most unequal countries in the world, ten are in Latin America and the Caribbean. Inequality has a severe impact on human development index rankings, which are reduced by 26.1 per cent when inequality is taken into account. The region also confronts income inequality and continues to be challenged by issues of crime and violence, gender, ethnicity, economic and environmental vulnerability, and territory, not only in unequal distribution but also in terms of exclusion. The region has the highest proportion of very vulnerable Small Island Developing States, middle-income countries and net contributing countries. Another persistent challenge is to improve the quality of democracies with ineffective public service provision, centralized decision-making processes, persistent corruption, and an inability to govern, prevent and manage conflicts.

It is part of the UNDP mandate to assist countries, upon their request, to address their urgent development challenges, supporting coalitions and partnerships for change and connecting individuals and institutions to share knowledge, experience and resources. As countries develop national capacity, they can draw on UNDP and its range of regional and global partners and programming arrangements.

In order to bring UNDP assistance closer to national institutions and country offices, and to improve effectiveness of services, RBLAC developed a regionalization plan that resulted in the distribution of its regional services across three locations: (a) the bureau itself, located at headquarters; (b) the regional service centre, concentrated in Panama City and operational since 2009 (with a sub-office in Port-of-Spain until 2011); and (c) decentralized services in selected locations in the region.

The regional service centre is expected to provide and support the delivery of most advisory services and perform delegated regional programme implementation functions; to provide and

support the delivery of management services to country offices; and to provide support to the regional directors' team. Knowledge management is expected to be one of the core services provided by the regional programme, within a strategy based on national ownership, capacity development and South-South cooperation. To further support the Caribbean, a sub-office of the regional service centre was established in Port of Spain in 2010 but was closed in 2011, according to RBLAC due to scarcity of funds and a lack of critical mass and concrete results.

The regional programme had 12 expected outcomes connected with its support to regional efforts to achieve development goals in the region in accordance with regional and national priorities, following the principles of the United Nations. The regional programme also worked with four cross-cutting areas: gender equality, knowledge management, HIV/AIDS, capacity development and South-South solutions.

III. KEY FINDINGS

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY REDUCTION AND MDG ACHIEVEMENTS

The application of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) in the region was key to enhancing national capacities for tracking progress towards the goals and moving beyond national averages that hide the plight of vulnerable and excluded groups. The regional programme focused on providing resources to enhance the capacity of country offices to provide assistance in tracking progress towards MDGs to national partners. The intrinsic flexibility of MAF has made it highly adaptable to the evolving and heterogeneous needs of the region in terms of achieving the Goals. The MDG Reports Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, the inventory of best practices on the Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean, the 'MDG community of practice' and the 'MDG in LAC' bulletins are resources as well as continuous channels of Goals-related data and information for country offices. The wealth of online interactive data has allowed several

country offices to become aware of regional debates on the Goals, acquaint themselves with the experiences of other countries, gain exposure for their own experiences, and provide data to governments and other national counterparts when required.

The poverty-related portfolio has gone beyond reflecting the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region; it has actually deepened the discussion on some of them (such as poverty and inequality) and placed them at the centre of the regional and national debates. Regional human development reports and research papers for public policy have generated and influenced the direction of relevant debates such as the dynamics and transmission of inequality, the metrics of poverty, and the effects of the economic crisis on progress towards achievement of the MDGs. The work on fiscal micro-simulation and analysis of progressive social and fiscal policies was a pioneering initiative in the region. The extensive public policy research has been relevant for UNDP external actors (academia, governments, civil society) in terms of their incorporation into the debate.

Practical instruments assisting country offices to increase the capacities of national institutions have been absent. The poverty and inequality material produced lacked a clear and jointly designed advocacy sequence linking these knowledge products with country office work on public policy advice. As a consequence, the knowledge generated did not translate into increased national capacities for integrating policies to reduce poverty, inequality and exclusion. The 'Virtual School' has been more successful in helping spread practical knowledge and experiences across the region by adapting existing courses for other countries. This process has led to a regionalization of experiences conducive to the development of regional cooperation, integration and the use of knowledge. The Virtual School offers the possibility of transforming knowledge and debate on human development into national capacities that could result in the integration of social policies to reduce poverty. However, it is

not possible to determine the extent to which the learning processes associated with the Virtual School result in the application of knowledge and increased capacity, because this is not measured by any of the actors involved. The virtual human development documentation centre is another clear contribution to enhanced accessibility and use of the vast wealth of knowledge contained in the national and regional human development reports. *Humanum* (the Latin American human development online journal) is also playing an expanding role in making human development information available and readily accessible and in promoting debate. The journal is regarded as an effective mechanism for disseminating conceptual contributions of the human development reports and allowing country offices to be connected with regional debates.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Contributions towards fostering inclusive participation for democratic development focused on opening spaces for dialogue between government and civil society, and building capacities of specific groups of constituents: indigenous peoples, people of African descent, youth, and women in specific countries. The regional programme contributed to increasing the participation of women; to enhanced discussion of the inclusion of minority groups; and to raising awareness and building capacities of specific groups to participate in dialogue. The political analysis and prospective scenarios project (known as PAPEP) has been particularly valuable and powerful in enhancing the position of UNDP in certain countries. The project made significant contributions through timely and effective reports, prepared at the request of the country offices or governments in critical situations, that were used to foster dialogue, build consensus and assist decision-making by providing policy advice on strategic national development issues. The reports placed UNDP at the centre of contemporary policy debates and provided governments with frameworks for assessing their own progress against that of their Latin American counterparts. There have been

fewer such interventions in the Caribbean: a democratic governance agenda for English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries has been under implementation since 2012, focused on the mapping and analysis of good practices on youth engagement and citizen security in the Caribbean; a report has been prepared on legal aid for women in the Caribbean; and a regional map has been assembled showing rule of law initiatives in the Caribbean. Work was also done to strengthen democratic governance in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) through the fielding of a CARICOM electoral observer.

To strengthen democratic governance, the regional programme worked towards strengthening the capacities of public administration for increased transparency and accountability as well as to improve operating systems and inclusiveness processes. The transparency and accountability in local governments initiative (known as TRAALOG) has given relevance to the issue of transparency and accountability in the region, helping to build capacity and to strengthen a regional system for sharing mechanisms and policies. The involvement of the regional programme has changed the day-to-day management of participating public institutions, making them more accountable and effective in their response to the public. Some of the most effective contributions have been the implementing methodologies (processes, systems and software) of the information and management system for democratic governance (known as SIGOB) to enhance public management. There are also missed opportunities for building on the knowledge and methods of these projects, and for scaling them up. Despite the effective contributions, there is still room to enhance coordination between the regional programme and UNDP global and national structures. Coordination is known to maximize efficiencies, harmonize initiatives and ensure clarity among country offices and local stakeholders with respect to who does what within the democratic governance

practice area, perceived to be fragmented between New York and the regional service centre.

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

The regional programme has successfully adapted from a funding approach to a technical added value one in support of strengthening capacities of national institutions to manage risks. The CPR Unit has been flexible in adapting methodologies, particularly on democratic dialogue, to the specificities and needs of different countries. These processes adapted to changing environments in the region by implementing a horizontal and participatory approach. The activities have been clearly of regional level and could not have been delivered by any country office alone. The unit has been dealing with specific institutional mandates, technical capacity, regional knowledge and politically sensitive issues. The regional programme has brought together countries that shared common problems to learn from each other, often developing networks along the way. These results have been greater than the sum of the results from separate national interventions. The CPR practice area contributed to strengthening national capacities with knowledge transfer and capacity development by facilitating an active community of practice among the 17 participating country offices. It has systematized and documented dialogue experiences, lessons learned and good practices into a virtual course and several publications. Different consultations conclude that all these efforts had enabled the country offices and some national counterparts to access methodological tools and skills in dialogue processes. Additionally, the CPR practice area was efficient in developing strategic partnerships and fund-raising close to USD 9 million for the region. The number of CPR practice area missions increased by 170 percent in two years. A 15 percent reduction in resources¹ has not affected efficiency and the technical team has been able to respond to requests by countries in

¹ According to the Service Tracker of RSC and the annual budget.

a timely manner, including unforeseen situations. Political, technical and economic sustainability was the rationale behind CPR interventions, fostered by: capacity development of country offices and national counterparts; permanent access to the CPR area of practice; and promoting the subscription of formal laws on dialogue processes. Processes were followed up, replication was sought and capacity transfer and knowledge management promoted to reduce future learning needs.

The citizen security theme has been strategically positioned at the regional level in the public agenda and has the potential to move to the global level. UNDP is deemed a responsive and trustworthy partner in citizen security issues, particularly to governments, and is the main international cooperation organization, accepted and valued by member countries as a partner in methodological issues for citizen security. Its regional knowledge, access to experiences in different countries, technical expertise, leadership in relevant communities of practice, crisis prevention and recovery expert networks, and neutrality in conflicts form the basis of its reputation. There is room for improvement with respect to advice on public policy and institutional reform to include long-term citizen security measures. So far, there has been little consistency in citizen security policies, and no long-term vision exists as the issue is politically sensitive and short-term measures are often implemented to influence public opinion. The design of the programme to address crisis prevention and recovery issues successfully contributed to empowering the region by transferring capacities to different governments and country offices with tailored tools, methodologies, strategic planning and conceptual models. The prevention approach to citizen security targets, gender, and women's rights, as well as marginalized groups (such as youth and ethnic groups) is promoted through the promotion of dialogue, participation and inclusion. Another significant contribution was the preparation of the Caribbean Human Development Report 2010-2012 on citizen security, covering

seven English- and Dutch-speaking countries. The report allowed better understanding of the root causes of polarization and lack of social cohesion, as well as their impact on citizen security. It provided fresh evidence, data and information on security in the region, stimulated discussion on the issue of crime prevention, and proposed new solutions. So far, four countries have developed country plans using the report and seven others are in the process of doing so. The crisis prevention and recovery practice area also supported the human development report on citizen security in Central America launched in 2009, with a high level of political participation in several countries.

The regional programme has been an effective advocate for the prevention of armed violence, providing technical assistance towards the development of tools and laws to control illicit trafficking in small arms, parts and ammunition. A guide to the establishment of national commissions was developed by UNDP, and there have been achievements in local security management thanks to situational and institutional assessments of local citizen security; formulation of comprehensive local policies; development of equipment master plans; knowledge transfer; toolkits; and training courses. Experience sharing was facilitated through exchange visits and seminars, which helped raise the visibility and positioning of the issue. In a number of countries, noteworthy results have also been reported in relation to mainstreaming gender in citizen security policies and plans and the enforcement of resolutions.

The regional programme has made a united effort to respond to the growing consensus that disaster risk reduction must be a priority in the region and has assisted in guiding the region away from an over-reliance on recovery responses to disasters. UNDP has worked to establish necessary changes in attitudes, policies, practices and procedures in various countries, encouraging the transition to disaster prevention. The consideration of natural disasters as a

regional programme priority issue would represent a shift from the more traditional emphasis on emergency response, and an integrated disaster management approach linking thematic areas and interventions such as poverty reduction, climate and environment. Noteworthy achievements during the programming phase included working in post-earthquake Haiti and reaching the long-standing objective of integrating gender into disaster risk reduction planning in a number of instances.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The biodiversity component of the regional programme created better circumstances in which to establish the basis for improved policies, practices and attitudes. Concepts that the regional programme sought to promote, such as biodiversity valuation and protected area financing, succeeded in producing critical publications, encouraging dialogue, and establishing a common comprehension of important concepts. The ‘protected area finance scorecard’ allows countries to evaluate the relative investment and costs of protected areas providing the means to improve funding gaps; it is estimated that close to 25 countries have made use of the scorecard. The biodiversity valuation tool looks at the relative value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to people and to the environment and attempts to quantify the difference between ‘business as usual’ and a scenario where ecosystems are managed sustainably so as to influence policy and decision-making.

The regional programme provided support to countries on energy and climate change-related matters while positioning UNDP as a strategic partner in the two fields. Carbon reduction-related activity was developed in seven countries as a result of ‘Carbon 2012’, increasing the use of the clean development mechanism in the region to geographically diversify its positive effects on progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and fostering increased investment in lower-carbon-intensity development. The regional programme facilitated

broad stakeholder engagement and contributed to the development of national policies and country-level best practices. The programme also provided support to raising awareness of the linkages between planning and financing the processes of the post-2012 climate regime and national policies. The programme supported countries in establishing policy structures to address the issue over the long term.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME

The increased threshold for ‘graduation’ status from a gross national income of USD 6,550 to USD 12,475 – actively promoted by the regional programme – can be considered a significant achievement. A pertinent strategy for net-contributor countries and middle-income countries is still pending, however. Fewer countries are expected to ‘graduate’ in the next programme period, as the regional programme has achieved the above increase in the threshold. Nevertheless, resident coordinators in the region indicate that little or no guidance has been provided from the regional programme or from the regional bureau to assist in developing a more consistent approach to working with net contributor and middle-income countries. There have been some discussions promoted by the regional programme, but virtually no opportunities have been provided for net-contributor countries and middle-income countries to discuss how UNDP can cooperate most effectively in the context of the unique role and development status of those countries.

The regionalization aspect of many regional programme initiatives is not clear, and most are perceived as multi-country activities without an underlying regional strategy. Stakeholders trust UNDP as a transparent institution but do not have a clear understanding of the criteria used to prioritize support. Many country offices and governments are not clear as to how demands are prioritized, and how countries are included in regional projects. Some stakeholders believe that this depends on individual relationships,

which would be contrary to UNDP principles. A more explicit regional strategy for support to country offices is lacking, one that would be not only demand-driven but based on clear communication about roles and streamlined information mechanisms. Other challenges that persist relate to cost-recovery strategies to allow synergies among clusters; the degree of participation of country offices in the regional project cycle; information flows; access to funds; and the transparency of responses to demands.

The regional programme played a less strategic role in the Caribbean than in Latin America and faced challenges working with net contributor countries, middle-income countries and Small Island Developing States due to their unique needs and the lack of a clear strategy and framework for cooperation. The regional programme does not have the same level of activity in the Caribbean as it has in Latin America. The long-standing support provided to the secretariats of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and CARICOM has declined significantly over the years and has for the most part been limited to financial and operational support. The regional programme is not as well positioned to understand the challenges and address or finance the specific needs of the extremely vulnerable Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean. There are constraints in terms of funding, human resources, demand, understanding of the region and language. The standard economic indicators do not accurately reflect the reality of many countries in the subregion and, in fact, create a distorted external view of the current development situation. The fact that these countries are Small Island Developing States adds further development challenges that must be taken into consideration by donors, subregional and regional institutions and the countries themselves when planning and implementing strategies for change.

The UNDP approach to the Caribbean as a geographic entity with a division of support according to language was not found useful or strategic enough to position UNDP support in

the region. There may be administrative reasons for grouping a particular set of countries together but there are programmatic imperatives that call for the consideration of different approaches. There is also a widespread perception among stakeholders in the Caribbean that the closing of the Trinidad and Tobago subregional office was not carried out in a transparent or consultative manner and was not communicated adequately. This has compromised the strategic positioning of the regional programme in the subregion. While stakeholders understand that lack of resources played a role in the decision, they do not agree that lack of results is a valid reason for closing a relatively new office whose and operations too recent to show concrete results given the limited resources available. Many considered that the office could have adjusted to the needs of the region if resources were more equally distributed. Even with the constraints of limited resources, the Trinidad and Tobago office was acknowledged to have worked well with the regional service centre in preparing the Caribbean human development report on citizen security.

The regional service centre played a key role in ensuring the implementation of the work plan of the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, and liaising with the regional directors in Panama. Regional programme staff worked actively in United Nations thematic groups. Stakeholders particularly valued the support of the coordination staff in Panama in planning and implementing United Nations development assistance frameworks (known as UNDAF) and harmonizing their efforts, and for its leadership in natural disaster relief work. UNDP offered support to other organizations in their responses to major hurricanes and earthquakes and worked on disaster preparedness and capacity-building for disaster mitigation, bringing in other strategic partners. Most stakeholders commended UNDP for its ability to increase donor harmonization and to convene dialogue among national and regional partners on key policy and practical issues and

sensitive multistakeholder consultations at different levels. In addition, national counterparts complimented UNDP on its sensitivity to country-driven approaches and its role in convening and leading discussions about the Millennium Development Goals, citizen security and regional integration. Stakeholders deemed that the overall UNDP commitment to foster and improve country ownership was in line with the Paris Declaration but that there were still challenges in achieving an adequate balance between donor- and country-driven approaches to programming.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

There is strong commitment and intention on the part of senior management and the practice areas to mainstream gender; however, a proactive strategy with dedicated financial resources is still lacking. Internal UNDP accountability has been strengthened to support the implementation of institutional mechanisms in the region that monitor gender mainstreaming, such as the 'gender marker', working with the gender focal points in country offices. The marker is credited as being a good first step, although it is seen as insufficient to provide meaningful information on how effectively gender is being mainstreamed. The results for gender mainstreaming are scattered, as there is no common understanding of what the extent of gender mainstreaming should be, and neither is it clear where accountability for implementing gender mainstreaming lies. This leads to regional thematic areas relying on the regional gender practice area to tackle gender issues (with the exception of HIV/AIDS) and thus to a lack of incentives and awareness of gender mainstreaming as a collective organizational responsibility.

The 'América Latina Genera, knowledge management for gender equality' regional project has contributed significantly to strengthening institutional capacity to develop regional cooperation in the generation and use of knowledge on gender. Genera has contributed to the dissemination, organization, and systematization of

information and knowledge; the establishment of networks and communities of practice; and the development of synergies among stakeholders on relevant gender issues. The platform has become a primary reference point and broker for knowledge on gender in the Spanish-speaking region.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management as a conceptual integrator could position the regional programme particularly well to promote South-South solutions and capacity development in the region. The regional programme has not systematically measured the contribution of knowledge management to development outcomes, but a number of initiatives have been monitored, as well as – to a certain extent – the use, quality, reach and influence of its products and services. The regional programme does not yet have a plan to strategically promote and integrate learning and inform decision-making in a better and more timely fashion, linking planning, monitoring and evaluation into learning processes through knowledge management and strategic communication routes. The regional programme included knowledge management in each area but has not yet reached the point where such considerations are systematically incorporated into project design from the outset.

What is not clear is the extent to which knowledge products that embed the systematized experiences are used in practice as inputs in subsequent initiatives. The regional programme does not monitor whether this occurs, and sample data collected in the evaluation show anecdotal evidence in both directions. There has been improvement in strengthening the management of networks and tools to channel knowledge, but the actual management and use of knowledge has not yet been optimized. The added value and cost-efficiency of some tools and platforms remain questionable. A recurrent theme raised by a variety of stakeholders during the evaluation was the need for a database of regional experiences with the possibility of searching experiences by topic and obtaining the contact

details of the relevant people so that effective transfer of experience could take place.

Knowledge products are frequently developed and resources expended without first drawing up a clear dissemination plan showing who will use the products, how and to what end. Thematic areas decide on the products, often without a thorough analysis of their use, including value for money. Where such strategies are in place they are ad hoc and on demand. Cybermetric analysis found that the majority of references to regional programme knowledge products came from external organizations and from countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which suggests that such products are used beyond the United Nations system.

Teamworks has not proved to be an effective knowledge management tool or companion to the communities of practice, other than as a repository of documents and presentations. Metrics from Google Analytics revealed that the majority of visits to Teamworks originate in New York. Teamworks “strives to foster a rich collaborative environment to deliver the most relevant knowledge where it is most urgently needed”, but despite that effort, country offices still perceive knowledge as dispersed rather than readily available. In short, Teamworks usage is not widespread, and when used it is not considered an efficient tool for finding information and sharing knowledge. Data collected in the evaluation indicated that a major factor contributing to that low opinion was insufficient orientation and training in the use of the platform, suggesting that the problem may not be the platform itself but the promotion of its use in country offices.

The communities of practice and their periodic meetings have had an important effect in terms of conveying, tightening up and maintaining the UNDP corporate spirit among country offices, thus contributing to the strategic positioning of the regional programme and UNDP in the region. This should not be underestimated in a context where most countries are middle-income and the work of country offices

is often related to providing direct technical assistance and support to government demands, a situation in which the corporate spirit may easily be diluted. Communities of practice with greater numbers of members and engagement in Teamworks are those dealing with evaluation, conflict prevention and citizen security, the Millennium Development Goals, and knowledge management.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOUTH-SOUTH SOLUTIONS

The cross-cutting area of capacity development has supported the identification of institutional weaknesses and the capacity development of country offices, targeted stakeholders and governmental institutions. The demand for support has increased steadily over the last several years, and capacity development has been better mainstreamed into key planning and programming documents in the region. Efforts have been made to make the capacity development process more participatory and increase ownership of the implementation of a response, thus helping to make such interventions sustainable. Further clarification of the role and specific goals of capacity development led to more effective delivery of assistance and closer collaboration with substantive practice areas. Collaboration with thematic practice areas has been significant, but has at times been hampered by the fact that this small cross-cutting area uses a cost-recovery business model.

The decision in 2008 to steer the human development activities of the Virtual School towards working with UNDP country offices and regional projects was instrumental in aligning the school with the capacity development needs of the regional programme. Although capacity development is not accurately measured, four factors are known to make the school a good means of contributing to capacity development in the region: (a) it has wide academic coverage across the themes of human development, democratic governance and crisis prevention and recovery; (b) it uses a wide variety of delivery mechanisms,

including virtual courses or forums, face-to-face teaching and self-taught courses, among others; (c) it reaches remote areas and a large number of individuals, increasing the chances of generating multiplier effects; and (d) a large portion of the participants are practitioners (UNDP officials, government representatives at national, subnational and local levels or members of civil society organizations throughout the region), increasing the chances that the knowledge conveyed through the courses will be applied in development practice.

The regional programme has supported an enabling environment to facilitate the exchange of South-South solutions. It has not been equally successful in moving beyond systematizing practices and sharing information towards a more proactive approach to facilitating concrete triangular or South-South cooperation. The regional programme has provided support through the promotion of specific networks; projects and dialogue spaces; human development courses provided by the Virtual School; and knowledge fairs and other tools for promoting the exchange of experiences, which, in some cases, created linkages across countries and geographic areas for South-South and triangular cooperation. Over the past years, the regional programme has also made efforts towards improving capacities for the promotion of South-South solutions by mapping (a) UNDP country office support and (b) triangular and multilateral support to South-South cooperation activities in the region.

HIV AND AIDS

Work on HIV and AIDS was perceived to add value, but as a cross-cutting aspect to be mainstreamed, it has not been able to convey its relevance to the challenges and needs of the region. There has been limited demand from country offices to support integration of HIV/AIDS concerns into poverty reduction strategies and development plans. One of the few visible achievements during the period was the inclusion of HIV/AIDS concerns in the Growth

and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2012-2016 of Grenada. The regional programme contributed indirectly to the integration of HIV/AIDS concerns into national development processes by supporting Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) partners, and the follow up of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law recommendations. The support provided for regional and national dialogues, advocacy tools for HIV/AIDS and the law, and support to traditionally excluded groups in the Organization of American States has also led to important steps forward and is paving the way to changes in punitive laws and improving AIDS governance at the national level. UNDP has made a substantial, visible and recognized contribution to achievements in HIV/AIDS due to the broad-based continued support and follow-up to the process of making marginalized groups more visible and supporting the participation in meetings of members of the coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex organizations such as the Latin America and the Caribbean Network of Transgender People, and the Heartland Alliance.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. UNDP has made relevant contributions to the development outcomes planned in the regional programme and to national development in the region.

The results proved more effective and sustainable when governments and other partners engaged sufficiently for shared ownership of interventions. In these cases, use of the limited resources of the regional programme was also more efficiently applied.

The regional programme was able to do more with the same or less resources, but the effectiveness of these investments was linked more to its strategies for sustainability than to the increased quantity of demands addressed. One of the comparative advantages of the regional programme, in a context of shrinking resources, was its recognized ability to leverage and mobilize

resources for country offices and other partners and stakeholders.

The programme still lacks an effective system for tracking and evaluating contributions to outcomes, value for money and the cost-efficiency of interventions in a systematic fashion.

Conclusion 2. In the context of countries graduating to a higher development status and increasingly scarce development aid resources, a failure to develop would put the relevance and the strategic positioning of the institution at risk.

Upper-middle-income countries, for example, are confronting development challenges for which UNDP could provide improved substantial assistance but which it is not supporting to its full extent at present. These include: improving the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of their governance systems; institutionalization of capacities; sustainable growth; and resilience to natural disasters and other environmental challenges. The presence of UNDP was perceived to be particularly important in highlighting, and in some cases providing support to addressing, the considerable remaining inequalities and vulnerabilities among, and within, countries in the region.

Conclusion 3. The added value and comparative advantages of the regional programme lie in its upstream work to facilitate regional and thematic networking, enhance cross-regional knowledge management, facilitate the transfer of South-South solutions, and engage stakeholders in sensitive topics.

The comparative advantages of the regional programme are becoming more evident in a context where it is increasingly difficult for UNDP to work in depth on a country-by-country basis, given the limited programme resources available, the large number of countries, and their widely differing development status. A model of small, under-resourced units, at headquarters or in regional service centres, expected to implement,

advise on and assist large numbers of projects in countries with diverse contexts and challenges is not feasible. Management and administrative resources are not adequate to support the range of demands placed on the regional programme, given its multi-country, multi-level and multi-partner programme context. If core resources at the country office level continue to dwindle, technical support from the regional programme will continue to become even more important for country offices. Consequently, strong, broad-based technical capacities in the regional programme will become increasingly essential.

Conclusion 4. The regional programme does not have a strategy suited to assisting national partners to address the needs and vulnerabilities of the Caribbean.

Together with insufficient support to country offices, the risk exists of further alienating UNDP from contributing strategically to development results in the subregion. The Caribbean – the Small Island Developing States in particular – lacks a distinct orientation from the regional bureau. Biodiversity, climate change, energy and disaster risk reduction are key priorities for the Caribbean, and these areas provide the best option for Caribbean country offices to mobilize resources. The UNDP approach to the Caribbean as a geographic entity or language-distinct area is not appropriate. Limited funding and interest from donors have amplified the difficulties in the greater Caribbean, and have hampered UNDP support in the subregion. Other aspects, such as lack of linguistic abilities, local understanding and demand have also interfered.

Conclusion 5. The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation and the promotion and development of South-South solutions.

The regional service centre has proved to be useful in facilitating the engagement of country offices and countries; disseminating best practices; providing tools (guides, roadmaps and technical assistance); and linking interested

countries to cooperate with one another. While some country-level international cooperation organizations are increasingly demanding support from UNDP to develop their capacities to effectively manage their development cooperation programmes and South-South cooperation mechanisms, others already have the capacity to undertake this work but need a structure to channel resources (both technical and financial), as well as a programme approach to South-South cooperation to facilitate its inclusion in regional programmes and projects. Working with country offices through ongoing consultation, rather than conducting a one-time process to design the regional programme, would enable the programme to address issues as they emerge and keep the focus on critical local matters.

Conclusion 6. The alignment between evaluation, knowledge management, communication, capacity development and South-South solutions is insufficient to effectively promote learning in an integrated manner to support the UNDP goal of being strategically positioned as a knowledge organization.

The programme lacks a clear understanding of the role of each of the cross-cutting areas and how they can best support the main practice areas to add effectiveness to the regional programme and services provided.

The UNDP business model, as set forth in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013, is based on strengthening national capacities by providing effective knowledge management, and corporate and regional policy and advisory support that is closer to where it is needed on the ground, so that services are responsive to the needs of country programmes. Using a results-based management corporate approach, this would entail linking monitoring and evaluation with impact metrics associated with developing capacities and the use of knowledge to prompt action that generates learning and change. The current level of integration between these core areas does not reflect the essence of the business model.

There is duplication and even competition within the regional programme, to the detriment of its coherence and effectiveness in support to country offices. The programme needs a unified process including the systematic use of quality indicators for measuring performance and results. The process would identify and evaluate good and bad practices and would analyse contexts in which practices are most appropriate for use or adaptation, dissemination of lessons learned, and informed decision-making. In this way, the synergies between these areas could translate into better accountability processes, enhanced results dissemination and sustainability, and more effective fund-raising.

Conclusion 7. The approach of mainstreaming cross-cutting areas into the regional programme is either not effective enough or does not adequately reflect the scope and nature of such areas.

As a consequence, the results framework reflects only a limited portion of the achievements of the regional programme in those thematic areas.

Although attempts to mainstream gender have translated into a distinct added value in the achievement of development results, gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently visible, explicit or promoted, and the impact of the regional programme on women and men is not systematically considered at every stage of the programme cycle. Steps to mainstream gender have been largely organic, depending on committed individuals rather than emerging from an institutionalized effort. On the other hand, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into other areas no longer reflects the HIV strategy in the region, which follows a human rights-based approach to the epidemic given that prevalence and incidence in the region are a direct consequence of stigma and discriminatory practices against vulnerable and excluded populations. Neither are the contributions to development outcomes of other cross-cutting areas, such as capacity development, South-South solutions, knowledge management and

monitoring and evaluation, adequately reflected in results-oriented annual reporting.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. The regional programme needs to focus on fewer and more realistic thematic priorities and more strictly prioritize initiatives in which UNDP brings a regional added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic partners able to support countries and, when and if appropriate, regional institutions in taking ownership to ensure the continuity and sustainability of results.

The regional programme must guard against getting drawn into initiatives in which it cannot maintain a steady presence or is unlikely to be able to contribute to long-term, sustainable results. It makes particular sense, at the regional level, to focus on addressing sensitive and underlying issues unlikely to be tackled at the country level, where less progress has been made, less capacity or political will exists, and where themes make sense only if tackled at a regional level (examples would include climate change adaptation, security, and Small Island Developing States issues). However, such a decision should not be prescriptive in nature; it should be approached and decided in a participatory and deliberative manner with different stakeholders to ensure buy-in and a regional agenda that is complementary to what UNDP is already working on at the global and country levels. It could also mean focusing on fewer prioritized target groups and constituencies or key specific issues affecting them.

Recommendation 2. The regional programme should be less involved in project implementation and should invest its limited resources on upstream initiatives such as: policy and technical advice; advocacy; dialogue; partnership building; multistakeholder coordination; networking; knowledge brokering; and capacity development.

An upstream approach would not exclude work on selected downstream activities at the country level, but these activities should be carefully chosen and investments needs to be clearly aligned with transformational change, either linked to the possibility of replicability, upscaling and where project experience/piloting is necessary to feed better informed policy advice. Work in the above upstream areas is fundamental in a region of middle-income and net contributor countries that may be less inclined to accept donor aid and are less concerned with aid effectiveness. This approach should build on increased consultation with partner countries and institutions, bringing multiple regional concerns into overarching upstream initiatives particular to each subregion. Feedback from regional institutions should be sought on a regular basis, particularly in designing the regional programme. The programme would thus be aligned with the Strategic Plan and would respond realistically to regional challenges given the available resources. The process should take the heterogeneity of the region into account.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should rethink its approach to the Caribbean and should develop a new development cooperation strategy with an adequate resource mobilization plan to allow UNDP to tackle the specific challenges, needs, priorities and opportunities of the Caribbean countries and the different development status and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, net contributor countries and middle-income countries.

In addition to the elements enumerated above, any new strategy for the Caribbean should include a strong South-South cooperation dimension among Latin America and Caribbean actors, bearing in mind the opportunities, nature and needs of the Caribbean countries. The subregion should also be better linked to the regional service centre through a more substantive technical advisory role, recognizing that there are currently major shortcomings in the ability of the centre to serve the Caribbean and recruiting staff

better able to fund-raise, speak the subregional languages and stimulate demand. Understanding Caribbean particularities alone will not solve the fact that there is still limited funding and little formal demand for UNDP and its services in the Caribbean. Therefore, the new strategy would also need to stimulate demand and advice on various modalities of international cooperation, better aligned with cost-sharing models and less dependent on international and UNDP core funding.

Recommendation 4. Mainstreaming strategies for cross-cutting areas should be reviewed.

Efforts should be intensified to integrate gender into the overall programming approach and into project development, should include formal learning about what constitutes gender in all programme areas, and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming should be designated. A comprehensive strategy and an operational plan should be drafted by all programme areas, with the assistance of the regional gender team, to make explicit commitments on gender mainstreaming and reach a common understanding of what should be done on gender mainstreaming under each practice area, and with what objective.

All programme designs should incorporate gender analysis, and adequate financial resources should be made available and explicit for gender mainstreaming under each project, programme and thematic area. Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS should continue as long as the Strategic Plan requires; but if it remains a priority, the regional programme should include a specific outcome for this theme, corresponding to the vertical nature of the intervention area. Establishing a specific outcome for HIV/AIDS would allow achievements in dimensions of the mandate that are not visible now to be reflected, as well as the human rights-based approach that characterizes the HIV strategy in the region.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should rethink how the regional programme can more strategically and realistically support triangular and South-South cooperation and measure the concrete effects and sustainability of those initiatives in a more systematic manner.

The regional service centre should discuss with other units in UNDP ways to improve the effectiveness of existing knowledge-generation and -sharing systems and should build on the inherent opportunities for enhanced South-South knowledge and technology exchange and cooperation. UNDP should proactively systematize and share not only best practices, but more importantly, learning and knowledge linked to the factors that make each practice generate more cost-effective and sustainable results.

Steps should be also taken towards consolidating a programming approach to South-South cooperation. Concrete, sustainable contributions to development from South-South cooperation initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean are still not easily identifiable, or in some cases too early to document. To date, most of these regional initiatives have been linked to knowledge fairs, study tours and conferences. Some of those engagements promoted further achievements, but the regional programme needs to be more selective when engaging in ‘one-off’ knowledge exchanges that do not guarantee follow-up or continued efforts until concrete results are achieved.

Several countries in the region are strengthening their own international development cooperation organizations, which comprise a knowledge exchange niche to which the regional programme can contribute. In all regions, emerging donors are supporting the expansion of South-South and triangular cooperation and offering a range of financial, technical and other services to other developing countries. It would be advisable for

the regional programme to focus on realistically supporting just a few intraregional, one-to-one interventions with specific goals for cooperation, along with realistic time-frames to enable the complete identification and transfer of knowledge to implement solutions.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should rethink how the cross-cutting areas can best support the core practice areas, increasing synergies and more thoroughly integrating planning, monitoring and learning from evaluations into knowledge management, capacity development, South-South solutions and communication in a more structured and focused environment to bring about a combined perspective for action, accountability and learning.

Knowledge management, as well as monitoring and evaluation, should be integrated into programming from the outset in designing programmes and initiatives. Particular attention should be paid to the end goal of all contributions, especially those linked to knowledge products – namely, to promote development outcomes.

Demand for and commitment to use the knowledge products need to be ascertained before they are commissioned, to guarantee the cost-efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of initiatives. The use of these knowledge products and their contribution to learning and behaviour change must be more carefully and

systematically tracked with the support of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to account for their cost-effectiveness and value added.

When appropriate, the regional programme should also identify opportunities to exchange technical capacities with other United Nations organizations in the implementation of regional and country programmes, as the experience and capabilities of United Nations staff is often more highly valued than that of external consultants. The new regional programme should follow the above recommendations in formulating more realistic outcomes that are proportionate to the limited funds available.

A results-based framework should incorporate mechanisms for tracking, monitoring and evaluating contributions to the outcomes that are made with ‘soft’ assistance, particularly the effects of knowledge products, research, advocacy and advisory services. Cost-effectiveness indicators should be systematically included, and the use of process and intermediate indicators is encouraged. The Service Tracker should be realigned to the new model of measuring contributions to results. The imbalance that exists in the cost-recovery business model needs to be considered carefully in the new programming exercise since it has implications for the effectiveness of efforts to mainstream capacity development, South-South solutions and knowledge management across countries and thematic areas.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation Office (EO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an independent evaluation of UNDP's Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in 2012. The evaluation was carried out as part of the Evaluation Office's annual work plan, approved by the UNDP Executive Board, which included evaluations of the five regional programmes and the global programme,² in line with provisions for independent evaluations in UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008-2013³.

The objectives of a regional programme evaluation are to provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board; facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014; and provide stakeholders in programme countries and development partners with an objective assessment of the contributions made by the regional programme.

The evaluation analysed the contributions made by the regional programme to development results during the programme period (2008-2013), and UNDP's strategic positioning in the region. The results of the evaluation, including a set of forward-looking recommendations, are expected to be fed into the new Regional Programme

Document (RPD) for the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC).

1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008-2013, as set out in RPD approved by UNDP's Executive Board, is structured around four broad themes – poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) achievement; democratic governance; crisis prevention and recovery; and environment and sustainable development – and 12 intended outcomes with 189 aligned projects.

The regional programme is implemented through the Panama Regional Service Centre (RSC) and from headquarters in New York. Until 2011, it was also partly implemented from the subregional centre in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, which was closed in 2011 for reasons that will be explained in the following chapters. In addition to implementing the regional programme *sensu stricto*, RSC provides advisory services, support to capacity development and knowledge management, all of which are expected to contribute to intended results of the Bureau for Development Policy's global programme, the regional programme and country programmes.

Data provided by RSC illustrate the difficulty in distinguishing the regional programme from other RSC work. Financial data reveal that the cumulative expenditure of the regional programme for the period 2008-September 2012

² DP/2011/24, Programme of Work for the Evaluation Office for 2011-2012, 'Annual Report on Evaluation in UNDP 2010', Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 6-17 June 2011.

³ DP/2007/43, 'UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008-2011: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 18 July 2007, Reissued 17 January 2008.

was USD 67,961,834. RSC has a Service Tracker to record advisory services rendered by all staff, but it is not set up to distinguish services according to funding sources. Staff at RSC did not distinguish their time allocation either to the regional programme from other advisory service provision.

Given this complexity, the evaluation took a results approach to define its scope. The regional programme is thus defined herein as “a set of programme activities designed to implement the programme as set out in RPD approved by UNDP’s Executive Board,” taking into consideration the review made after the mid-term evaluation (MTE), irrespective of the source of funding for those activities and the work undertaken by RSC and the units in RBLAC supporting regional activities that contribute to regional outcomes.

1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The regional programme evaluation assessed UNDP’s performance in relation to two aspects: the organization’s contribution to regional development results through its thematic programmes, and its strategic position in the region.

With respect to development results, the regional programme evaluation assessed performance against the given programme framework – RPD – which specified UNDP’s strategic intent and the precise objectives to which the programme was intended to contribute.

Given the confluence of these several interventions, not to mention the work of other partners, attribution of development change to the regional programme (in the sense of establishing a causal linkage between a development intervention and an observed result) is not pursued in this analysis. The evaluation, therefore, considered contribution of the regional programme to the intended 12 outcomes stated in RPD and its shadow outcomes developed after MTE commissioned by RSC.

Assessments of contributions at the national level considered the complementarity of the regional programme strategy and activities with the national strategy, as well as with the appropriate UNDP country programme, and considered their significance and specific added value to the national, regional and global efforts in the same or related priority areas.

With respect to strategic positioning, the evaluation not only considered UNDP’s strategic position within the region, but the positioning of the regional programme within the multi-tiered structure of UNDP support to the region and its constituent countries.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

In assessing the achievement of programme outcomes, the evaluation used the following criteria:

- *Relevance:* How relevant are the RPD intended outcomes and programme interventions to (a) the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region (at regional and country levels); (b) promotion of UN values and UNDP mandate; and (c) its comparative strengths?
- *Effectiveness:* To what extent has the regional programme contributed to the realization of the intended outcomes as outlined in RPD and key projects documents? Has the regional programme contributed to other outcomes?
- *Efficiency:* Has the regional programme made good use of its financial and human resources?
- *Sustainability:* To what extent are the results that UNDP contributed to through the regional programme sustainable?

While assessing performance using the above criteria, the evaluation also identified various factors that helped to explain performance:

- *Consultation:* to what extent did the regional programme consult with stakeholders in designing projects and activities?

- *Regional dimension:* Did UNDP apply an appropriate mix of modalities and approaches (e.g. regional public goods, subregional issues, multi-country interventions, technical support to country offices, etc.) to maximize performance in view of regional needs?
- *Partnerships:* To what extent did the regional programme use partnerships (with civil society, private sector, regional inter-governmental bodies, parliaments, international development partners, etc.) to improve its performance?
- *Synergies:* To what extent did the regional programme work in synergy with, or leverage work done through, the global or country programmes?
- *Gender:* To what extent did the regional programme undertake adequate gender analysis and mainstreaming to ensure more effective performance?
- *Capacity development:* Did UNDP adequately invest in, and focus on, national capacity development to ensure sustainability?
- *Knowledge management:* To what extent were the knowledge products delivered by the regional programme and RSC adapted to country and regional needs?
- *Monitoring:* To what extent did the regional programme effectively monitor country situations and the effect of interventions at the country level?
- *Expertise:* To what extent did the regional programme offer appropriate technical expertise and/or knowledge (of substance, methodologies, regional and country context)?

EVALUATION PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT

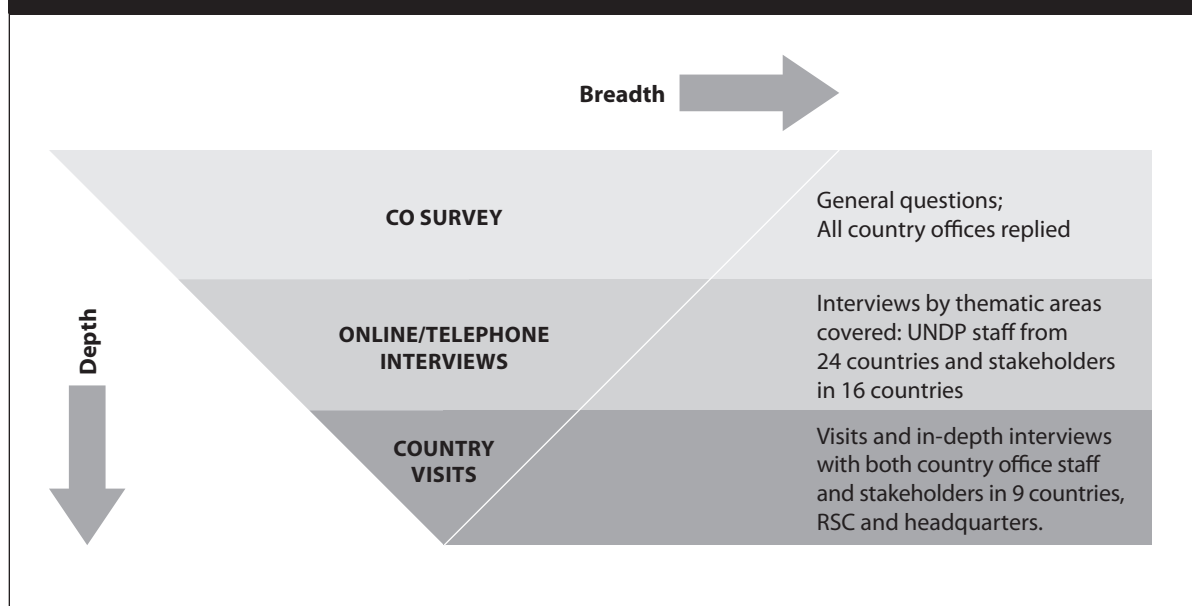
The evaluation was conducted by the evaluation manager/team leader from the Evaluation Office and five independent thematic experts/evaluators. The team was made up of three men and three women of different nationalities, with

backgrounds relevant to UNDP's focus areas, considerable prior experience in conducting evaluations, and extensive experience in the LAC region.

The evaluation was designed to allow conclusions to be drawn based on the triangulation of evidences collected from sources (primary and secondary), and using different methods. In the initial stages, the evaluation relied on existing documentation, including programme and project documents, progress reports, knowledge products, project evaluations and outcome evaluations and the previously undertaken mid-term evaluation of the regional programme, EO thematic evaluations, the evaluation of UNDP contribution at the regional level to development and corporate results, and Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) from the region. To complement this information, the evaluation adopted a strategy to collect primary data to ensure both sufficient coverage (breadth) and insight into the role and functioning (depth) of the regional programme: a survey of Resident Representatives and country offices, online questionnaires to external stakeholders, online/telephone interviews by thematic and cross-cutting area; and in-depth, face-to-face interviews during country visits. A detailed data collection plan was prepared, following a prioritization exercise to select representative stakeholders and countries for the interview and country visits. The plan included:

- A stakeholder mapping for interviews and consultations.
- A list of projects/activities for assessments of contributions to outcomes.
- A list of secondary data sources for consultation.
- Questionnaire protocols for interviews and primary data collection.
- Field visit plan, including a country selection matrix based on a set of criteria identified by RBLAC/RSC staff and the Evaluation Office.

Figure 1. Evaluation Process



Source: Evaluation Office 2012

DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation used various data collection methods:

- *Desk reviews:* Data collection began with a detailed desk review of key background documents and reference materials. The evaluation team collected and reviewed additional material throughout the evaluation (Annex 3).
- *Stakeholder interviews:* Desk reviews were followed by primary data collection involving contact with identified stakeholders in RSC, RBLAC, country offices and national counterpart ministries, and other stakeholders and participants in the regional programme, other UN agencies, regional institutions and donors. The evaluation began with an inception mission to the Panama RSC, to enable the evaluation team to develop a thorough understanding of the regional programme through interactions with programme staff and the gathering of key documents. Given the budget and time constraints, the team relied extensively on telephone interviews and Skype calls, limiting the need for field visits to an absolute minimum, while still covering a wide range of countries and stakeholders. UNDP staff in 24 country offices and national and regional stakeholders in 16 countries were interviewed.
- *Field visits:* In-depth interviews of both UNDP staff and national and regional stakeholders were conducted in nine countries. The criteria for selection of the countries included subregional coverage, overall thematic coverage, the volume of programme activities, and the existence of major achievements/challenges from which the evaluation could draw lessons and good practices. Some of the country offices (Mexico and Colombia) initially selected were not able to receive the team during the data-collection period; the team, therefore, proceeded to collect data in other countries.

South America: Argentina, Bolivia
 Central America: El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama
 Caribbean: Barbados, Saint Lucia, Belize, Guyana

In total, over 300 people were consulted in the course of the evaluation. A full list of people consulted during the evaluation is attached to the report (Annex 2).

- *Country office survey:* A survey to capture country offices' feedback on the five regional programmes and the global programme was designed and administered by the Evaluation Office. The survey consisted of 24 questions on the perceived quality of technical support, knowledge products, and regional/global products delivered by the respective regional centres. All 24 country offices in the LAC region replied to the survey. It should be noted that the survey results were utilized only as one leg of triangulation processes due to the fact that the survey was sent to highest management of the country offices to respond, so possibly not the direct users of the services responded to the survey, possibly causing a bias in favour of the more 'political' thematic areas. Senior management is not always aware of all the support provided.⁴
- *Cybermetric analysis:* An analysis of the regional programme knowledge products and platforms was also conducted to provide an additional source of data. The analysis conducted draws on cybermetric research methods to study the types of activity occurring on third-party websites, and uses social scientific methods to summarize trends occurring across large data sets. This approach differs from web analytical methods that are primarily limited to a particular website. Cybermetric methods have provided insight into activity happening across potentially thousands of websites, and were used to reveal larger online trends such as the types of organizations citing documents, their geographic distribution, and how they are referencing publications or websites, and a large range of other topics. The cybermetric analysis does not measure non-web-based constituencies, depth and scope of the knowledge products referred. The scope of this analysis was:
 - Overview of knowledge platforms and online network with topologies and online relationships for key knowledge platforms, presented through social network analysis maps.
 - Knowledge product dissemination reports, revealing the geographic distribution of users of the products, the types of actors who are citing, relevant focus areas/practice areas, and estimates of online citations.
 - Knowledge platforms and online networks to highlight trends relevant to the evaluation questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

After completion of the main data collection phase, the following steps were taken to analyse the data:

- The primary data collected and relevant information from secondary data were analysed by each sector to reach a set of findings for each evaluation criteria defined.
- The evaluation team engaged in cross-examination of these sectoral findings to ensure consistency in the quality of these findings across sectors.
- Based on the sectoral findings, cross-sectoral and comparative analysis was conducted, and salient factors were analysed. Findings on cross-sectoral issues (e.g. capacity development and South-South solutions, knowledge management, and HIV/AIDS) were extracted from sectoral findings and analysed to identify common issues across sectors.
- Special attention was given to assessing how/whether the promotion of gender equity and equality underpinned interventions of the

⁴ The regional service centre released a study that compared responses from surveys answered by senior management and by the direct users of the services that showed the discrepancy of results.

regional programme. This was done, on the one hand, by analysing the specific contributions of the regional programme to promote gender equity and equality, focusing on (but not limited to) those interventions managed by the gender practice area, and, on the other, by developing appropriate questions and analysis tools to evaluate whether gender had been mainstreamed in each specific area.

- After these detailed analyses of individual data and findings, key strategic issues were identified, including the role of the regional programme, the 'regionality' or regional nature of the programme components, and the use of cross-practice and issue-based approaches.
- These were analysed using a brainstorming method, responding to the questions from the evaluation matrix and consolidating the main findings around the evaluation criteria to allow judgments leading to the main conclusions and recommendations.

VALIDATION AND REPORT PREPARATION PROCESS

These preliminary findings were presented to RSC and RBLAC for validation and comment. The feedback received was further discussed and compared with the preliminary findings, conclusions and areas for recommendations. The draft evaluation report was prepared after further assessment by the evaluation team of the findings, ensuring their consistency across various data sources and methods, and then arriving at a final set of conclusions and recommendations. The draft report was shared with RSC and RBLAC for review, with particular attention to factual accuracy. The draft report was also reviewed by an external reviewer to assess the quality and credibility of the report's findings. Taking into account the comments received, the report was then finalized in time for submission to the Executive Board in 2013.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation faced challenges in delineating the boundaries of the regional programme, given the overlap in the nature of activities, the use of human and financial resources and reporting of results by the regional programme and RSC. Furthermore, the intended results of the regional programme overlap with those of the global programme and with those of country programmes, making it challenging to completely compartmentalize and distinguish the results of the regional programme as distinct from results of other UNDP programmes.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The evaluation report consists of five chapters. Following the present introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the development context and challenges of the Latin America and the Caribbean and UNDP's presence in the regions its response to those challenges, providing the rationale, structure and evolution of the regional programme and the content of the current programme framework for the period 2008-2013. Chapter 3 presents the assessment of UNDP's contribution to regional development by thematic area, with examination of corresponding outcome areas. Chapter 4 presents the team's assessment of the contributions made by the cross-cutting areas and UNDP's strategic position in the region. Finally, drawing on specific findings and assessments, a set of conclusions and recommendations are summarized in Chapter 5. The main report is followed by a number of annexes. The first four annexes – the terms of reference, list of people consulted, list of documents consulted, and the management response – are contained in the present report. The additional annexes are contained in Volume II – Additional Annexes, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>.

CHAPTER 2.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND UNDP RESPONSE

This chapter provides an overview of the main development issues, themes and trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, and how UNDP has organized its operations to design and implement a regional programme to respond to the challenges and priorities of the region during the period of time covered by the evaluation.

2.1 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

The goal of this brief overview of the regional context is to illustrate the dynamics of the period in which the regional programme was operational, and the challenges faced and addressed. Understanding the regional context during the implementation period is key to undertaking this evaluation and enables observations regarding the degree to which the regional programme was able to respond to changing circumstances on the ground.

The region covered by RBLAC comprises 33 countries and dependent territories in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Latin America, Spanish, Portuguese, and French are primarily spoken. In the Caribbean, English, Spanish, Dutch and French are the main languages spoken. RBLAC has 24 UNDP country offices, five in the English/French-speaking Caribbean and two in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, seven classified as Mesoamerica (including Mexico), five Andean, and five classified as Southern Cone.⁵

In 2008, when the regional programme was initiated, the region was, for the most part, benefiting

from a positive economic upturn. Important development trends were the linking of national and global markets, enabling the participation of the poorest and ensuring that they benefit from globalization. Exclusion from the advantages of global opportunities was linked to increases in income inequality.

Other key challenges in 2008 included the danger of major global pandemics, and global crime networks controlling large amounts of resources. Most countries had already adopted significant economic reforms to stimulate foreign investment and encourage the private sector to assume economic leadership. However, social and economic problems persisted. The capacity of public institutions to deliver much-needed services was still limited.

Large amount of resources had to be spent on crisis recovery due to environmental disasters. The destruction of biodiversity, desertification, degradation of arable lands and freshwater supplies, along with proliferation of hazardous chemicals were significant concerns, later on climate change also became a clearer concern. In recognition of mounting environmental challenges, the countries of the LAC region have established legislation on the environment and are signatories to multilateral environment agreements (MEAs)⁶. Despite advancements in public spending on the environment in the region, countries remain very limited and significant capacity weaknesses are still easily identified in terms of national level legislation. In relation to MEAs, there is often still an absence of national

⁵ The classification is based on the geographical proximity of the countries.

⁶ Such as the Montreal Protocol, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity.

strategies, policies and capacity on matters such as biodiversity and climate change.

As in the rest of the world, the LAC region is being adversely impacted by climate change. For Central America and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Caribbean, the threat of climate change is considerable due to the same biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of all countries in the broader Caribbean. The Caribbean is similar to Central America in terms of being constantly in the path of extreme weather events such as hurricanes and having large segments of the population and economic infrastructure located in vulnerable areas such as coastal zones. Countries in South America are also considered to be among those most negatively impacted by climate change and desperately requiring suitable adaptation strategies.

Between 2008 and 2012, the rise of natural disasters further challenged the human and economic development of the region. In addition to hurricanes in Central America, an earthquake hit Haiti in 2010 killing 300,000 people and leaving more than half a million homeless. Soon after, one of the biggest earthquakes on record caused USD 30 billion in damage in Chile.⁷ Despite the measures taken to predict, prevent or minimize their causes and mitigate their adverse consequences, climate change and other strong recurrent natural events in the region are increasing negative impacts on productive development. These events contributed to exposing the challenges that governments in the region face in developing better risk-reduction practices, including improved and effective systems for emergency preparedness and response and the proper management of relief funds.

The LAC region is blessed with an incredible richness of biodiversity from Peru to Suriname and through the islands of the Caribbean. The

challenge in managing the region's biodiversity stems in good part from the economic activity of the region, which is geared heavily towards natural, including mineral, exploitation. At the other end of the spectrum, the economic importance of tourism in the Caribbean demonstrates how protecting biodiversity can become an economic plus.

Most Caribbean countries are still facing problems identified as common to SIDS. These include small populations, limited resources, susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive dependence on international trade, high transportation and communication costs, disproportionately expensive public administration and infrastructure due to small size, and little to no opportunity to create economies of scale.

HIV/AIDS and other global health challenges (tuberculosis, malaria, etc.) are devastating communities and affecting broadly countries' development at enormous social and economic costs. Such diseases are one of main factors pushing households into poverty and deprivation, especially in low- and middle-income countries, as in LAC region, and for the most vulnerable population. The Caribbean is the only region outside of the sub-Saharan Africa region where women represent more than 50 percent of the adults living with HIV, and AIDS is the leading cause of death among adult women and men. In Latin America, the region with highest level of inequality in the world, the HIV epidemic is particularly intense in people involved in commercial sex, men who have sex with men, transgender people, and people in jail, drug users and other marginalized groups.

Another issue that has become more significant since 2008 is the fact that the LAC region has the highest proportion of middle-income countries (MICs), 29 Member States,

⁷ <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/17/latinamerica-economy-fund-idUSL2E8EH1BN20120317>>.

four of which are already net contributor countries (NCC)⁸ – Mexico, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados. Only Haiti belongs to the special development situation (SDS) category. Furthermore, 16 UN Member States from the Caribbean belong to the category of SIDS.⁹ Because of medium and high levels of income in the region, some bilateral donors find it increasingly difficult to justify remaining in the region.

In 2009, the United Nation General Assembly approved a resolution recognizing the centrality of MICs in the UN's mandate, acknowledging their needs and challenges. While on average countries in this group are advancing, their progress is uneven, propping up inequalities. In 2012, Latin America and the Caribbean was the region with the highest proportion of MICs in the world.

During the years following the introduction of the regional programme, citizen security has been a growing concern for Latin America and the Caribbean as well. Gender-based violence (GBV) also remained an important challenge related to human security in the region: 30 percent to 50 percent of the region's women involved in intimate partnerships have suffered psychological abuse and 10 percent to 30 percent have suffered physical violence¹⁰. A gender gap also continued to exist in the labour market and in terms of the proportion of women with access to professional opportunities, political and economic decisions. Women continue to have less access to economic resources. Inequalities also persisted with racial and ethnic minorities. This is especially true for indigenous peoples and African descendants.

These issues, alongside the slow economic recovery and inability to create employment, continued to have an impact on citizens. Citizens showed increasing frustration with the inability of democracy and public institutions to deliver tangible economic and social benefits. Particularly the youth have been largely excluded from employment and educational opportunities.

Regarding the Millennium Development Goals, in 2008 the indication was that achieving the goals set for 2015 would require modifications in the “existing growth and inequality patterns through the promotion of inclusive growth, equitable delivery of social services and economic opportunities for the poor”.¹¹ According to the Human Development Report 2011, although the situation regarding health and education has improved, Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be the most unequal region in terms of income. Poverty levels have been decreasing, from 44 percent to 33 percent between 2002 and 2009. As the regional programme was implemented, poverty levels reached 31.4 percent in 2010 – its lowest level in 20 years.¹² The rate of extreme poverty or indigence¹³ also fell during the programme implementation period – from 22.6 percent in 1990 to 12.3 percent in 2010. Despite these achievements, within the same period 177 million people were still living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, including 70 million in extreme poverty. Poverty in LAC continued to be accompanied by the worst inequality levels in the world, 0.50 as the Gini coefficient in 2010.¹⁴

⁸ For UNDP, net contributor countries are a special group that bring together the UN principle of universality with that of progressivity: All countries are eligible to participate in UNDP programmes, but those with higher levels of income are affected by policies that limit the resources that can be provided by UNDP.

⁹ In MICs UNDP structures are often leaner and more compact. Partnerships are primarily inwardly looking and seek to mobilize internal financial resources, knowledge and expertise to support nationally defined development objectives. Increasingly, bilateral donors play a relatively limited role in providing development assistance to MICs.

¹⁰ Inter-American Development Bank estimates.

¹¹ Regional Programme Document 2008-2011 p. 2 (item 4).

¹² According to a report from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹³ Level of income that does not cover nutritional needs.

¹⁴ <http://www.econstats.com/wdi/wdiv_959.htm>.

LAC's key challenge remains the reduction of inequality. Of the 15 most unequal countries in the world, ten are in LAC. Inequality has a very serious impact on the Human Development Index, which is reduced by 26.1 percent when taking inequality into account. Inequality is also reflected in the access to and quality of services such as health, education, nutrition and basic infrastructure and justice. The region faces challenges in terms of income inequality, and continues to be challenged in terms of gender, ethnicity, economic and environmental vulnerability and territory, not only in unequal distribution but also in terms of exclusion. Coupled with this is the fact that the LAC region has the highest proportion of very vulnerable SIDS, MICs and NCCs. A significant challenge now is to help these countries jump out of the 'middle-income trap'.¹⁵

Another persistent challenge is to improve the quality of democracies. LAC has experienced the longest period of democratically elected governments and peaceful electoral processes, but the region is still challenged with ineffective public service provision, centralized decision-making processes, persistence of corruption, and an inability to govern, prevent and manage conflicts. On a positive note, during this period the region saw an increase in the share of women parliamentarians, ranking second to Africa at nearly 23 percent¹⁶. Also, three new women Presidents and two woman Prime Ministers were elected¹⁷, which has made the ratio of female to male presidents one of the highest in the world (International Parliamentary Union, 2011). However, low political participation and representation in various countries persists.¹⁸

2.2 UNDP IN THE REGION

Provided below is background information about UNDP's response to these issues in the region, as well as the LAC regional programme's organization, management systems, financial and budgetary arrangements.

UNDP CORPORATE STRUCTURE TO RESPOND TO REGIONAL CHALLENGES

It is part of UNDP's mandate to assist countries, upon their request, to address their urgent development challenges, supporting coalitions and partnerships for change and connecting individuals and institutions to share knowledge, experience and resources. As countries develop national capacity, they can draw on UNDP and the range of regional and global partners and programming arrangements.

In order to align with the UN reform agenda, bring UNDP assistance closer to national institutions and country offices, and improve effectiveness of services, RBLAC developed a regionalization plan¹⁹ understood as the "reorganization of regional services and their location in the optimal venue, either in headquarters, in a regional service centre, or elsewhere in the region".

In this context, the thrust of the strategy in LAC was the co-location with some degree of decentralization. Co-location was understood as "locating regional services together with connected UNDP or UN services, partners or clients, depending on the nature of its functions". The degree of decentralization, which defines the

¹⁵ The 'middle-income trap' occurs when a country's growth plateaus and eventually stagnates after reaching middle-income levels. The problem usually arises when developing economies find themselves stuck in the middle, with rising wages and declining cost competitiveness, unable to compete with advanced economies in high-skill innovations, or with low-income, low-wage economies in the cheap production of manufactured goods.

¹⁶ ECLAC, 2010.

¹⁷ Costa Rica (2010), Brazil (2011), Argentina (2011), Jamaica (2012) and Trinidad and Tobago (2010).

¹⁸ Approximately 30 percent in Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guyana; and less than 10 percent in Belize, Haiti, Panama and Brazil. Even more acutely at the local level where female representation in high positions such as mayor amounts to only 8 percent and elected female town councillors to 22.4 percent (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2011).

¹⁹ The application of regionalization in the LAC region is clearly defined and explained in the document 'Regionalization in Latin America and the Caribbean', Draft Version, 23 August 2007 and the 'Functional Alignment Document', January 2008.

geographical location of each regional service, depended on the optimization of functions and interactions²⁰ to advance the main objectives of regionalization, which were: 1) stronger substantive alignment of development policy; 2) enhanced coordination of the UN system, and; 3) improved efficiency and accountability in operations.

The LAC regionalization strategy resulted in the distribution of RBLAC regional services across three locations: 1) LAC Regional Bureau at headquarters in New York; 2) The regional service centre (concentrated in Panama City with a sub-office in Port-of-Spain); and decentralized services in selected locations in the region that will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

THE REGIONAL BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

RBLAC is made up of 24 country offices. At headquarters in New York are the desk officers in charge of overseeing country programmes; the unit in charge of Strategic Monitoring and Support for the Caribbean and the team leaders for the democratic governance and the poverty, MDGs and human development practice areas, all under the direct supervision of the RBLAC Director and Deputy Director.

THE REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE

RSC became fully operational in 2009 to support in the implementation of the regional programme. Within the LAC regionalization framework, RSC is expected to provide and support the delivery of most advisory services, and perform delegated regional programme implementation functions; provide and support the delivery of management services to country offices; and provide support to the Regional Directors' Team.

To further support the Caribbean, a sub-office of RSC was established in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in 2010 and a multi-country office in Bridgetown, Barbados to also support the needs of Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries. The sub-office in Trinidad and Tobago closed in 2011, according to RBLAC due to scarcity of funds and lack of critical mass and concrete results. Today, the multi-country office of Barbados and OECS supports the work of the subregion. More recently in 2012, a new unit has been organized in New York to provide monitoring and strategic support to the Caribbean and support fund-raising efforts for this subregion. More details about the closure of the sub-office in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean are provided in subsequent chapters.

RSC was designed to serve as a hub for readily available expertise to governments in LAC through country offices and UN agencies. There are coordination arrangements achieved between RBLAC, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) formalized in signed agreements that introduced a shift in management of the regional programme after the consolidation of RSC in 2008-2009 to improve coordination of UNDP cooperation at the regional level in connection with country offices. The RSC structure includes nine teams of policy advisers and specialists organized by thematic and cross-cutting areas, four teams of regional advisers in management areas, the UNDG-LAC Secretariat, a regional communications specialist, an Operations and Project Implementation Unit that operationally and administratively assists all units, and the directorate in charge of the overall management and functioning of the centre. RSC is accountable to a governing board made up of the main sponsors and clients²¹ of the centre, and chaired by the RBLAC Director. This board is responsible for the quality and efficiency

²⁰ The location of services in LAC was done based on the following criteria: i) proximity to senior management; ii) existence of other complementary UNDP/UN services; iii) installed capacities and networks; iv) proximity to clients; and v) internationalization of personnel, reallocation and operations cost.

²¹ BCPR, BDP, Bureau of Management and one Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator of each subregion in LAC.

of RSC's services and functions in support to country offices and other clients, as well as for the overall performance of the regional programme.

The RSC Director under the regular purview of the RBLAC Director carries out the day-to-day management of the centre. The RSC Director has the first line of supervision of the team leaders of all the thematic and cross-cutting areas based in Panama, and team leaders directly supervise their teams' personnel and results. In the case of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) technical advisers in the environment and energy group (EEG), this task is shared with UNDP-GEF at headquarters. The Director of RSC also supervises the work of the regional legal adviser, the procurement adviser and that of the Operations Unit in Panama. The oversight of the adviser and the Management Support Centre is done directly from Office of Information Systems and Technology/Bureau of Management (BOM) and that of the regional auditors relies on the Office of Auditors at headquarters.

RSC offers services which include: policy advice directly or through the associate network of experts; lead and support communities of practices (CoPs); support in design and innovation; knowledge management support, platform and ready-to-use tools; expert identification; sharing global and regional expertise; training (Virtual School and others); technical assistance (monitoring and evaluation, communications, legal, security, procurement); support resource mobilization; business process support; and support and implementation of the regional programme.

RSC has 41 international staff, and 44 national staff, making a total of 85 professional and administrative personnel.²² There are multiple sources of funding for the regular operations of the centre, proceeding from budget allocations of BDP,

BCPR, BOM and RBLAC, and from core extra-budgetary (XB) income generated by the centre.

2.3 THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME

UNDP's regional strategies in the LAC region were to be carried out under the framework of RPD, designed in 2007, initiated in 2008 and extended until 2013. The aim of RPD was to provide assistance to regional efforts to achieve development goals in the LAC region according to regional and national priorities, following the principles of the United Nations. Furthermore, the regional programme aimed to advance UN reform, UNDP 'agenda for change'²³ and the harmonization of agendas within the UN system in the region to contribute to the effectiveness of the United Nations and international cooperation development aid interventions.

The regional programme is expected to achieve the right balance between regional interventions based on UNDP's comparative advantage and support for national programmes. The latter aims to meet demands for technical and policy advisory support and capacity development for the implementation of country programmes.

Regional interventions are based on different strategies:

- advocating for regional public goods;
- taking advantage of cross-border and inter-sector externalities and spillovers;
- providing support to regional dialogue and consensus-building processes and stimulate concerted action on critical development problems, and;
- promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge, including systematization and dissemination of good practices.

²² The personnel directly reporting to the RSC director total 77.

²³ The 'agenda for change' is an action plan agenda that seeks to accelerate the pace of change, particularly restructuring headquarters and regional service centres. It targets an identified set of issues to enable UNDP to more effectively support country offices deliver visible, consistent impact on the ground.

Knowledge management is expected to be core to the services provided by the regional programme within a strategy based on national ownership, capacity development and South-South cooperation. A human-rights-based approach (HRBA) underpins the platform of operations, organized in four key areas and four cross-cutting areas described below.

The regional programme management is organized into four practice areas and four cross-cutting areas, each headed by the respective team leader. CoPs are also available and involve larger networks of professionals and technical staff at UNDP headquarters bureau, RSC, advisers and focal points at UNDP country offices in LAC and, until 2011, also at the sub-regional service centre in Port of Spain. Although not always fluidly, for the most part, the areas operate following a matrix organization, where practice areas operate with relative autonomy and without consideration of their institutional insertion or funding source.

Some practice area leaders in Panama are funded by BDP and BCPR and therefore report to the RSC Director, BDP and/or BCPR. The practice leaders in New York are funded by RBLAC core funding and report directly to the Director and Deputy Director of RBLAC. A recent Management Consulting Team report suggested another D-1 level officer be hired to supervise the leaders of practice areas in New York and Panama, but there are no funds available. Until further notice, the leaders of practice areas in New York report to RBLAC's Deputy Director and Director. This operative structure has its weaknesses and strengths that will be discussed further as they vary by area.

In addition, RSC has instituted associate experts networks to respond to the assistance needs of country offices in the region, aiming also to constitute a key element for knowledge management networks and key element of services in various

areas and as a part of the centre's technical capacity, they are expected to understand UNDP vision, principles and objectives.

THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME BY FOCUS AREAS

The regional programme has 12 expected outcomes. In 2010, as part of the process of implementing the recommendations of MTE, a revision of the results framework was requested to better define the expected outcomes with what became shadow outcomes, and with improved indicators and baselines. These refined outcomes are organized under the four focus areas as follows:

Focus area 1: Poverty and inequality reduction, and MDG achievement

In this area, UNDP planned to contribute towards four outcomes:

1. **Outcome 27 - Strengthened capabilities of Government to reduce poverty and inequality and promote inclusion, particularly for vulnerable and excluded groups.** SHADOW OUTCOME: Government policies and development plans effectively address HIV in to the poverty, protect human rights and gender equality of vulnerable and strengthen coordination of national responses.
2. **Outcome 28 - Improved MDG tracking through enhanced national capacity to generate and use indicators and data disaggregated for vulnerable and excluded groups.** SHADOW OUTCOME: Enhanced national capacities for MDG tracking with disaggregated data on vulnerable and excluded groups.
3. **Outcome 29 - Strengthened capacities of national institutions to integrate social and economic policies for the**

reduction of poverty and inequality.
SHADOW OUTCOME: Increased knowledge and debate on human development and national capacities to integrate social and economic policies to reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion.

4. **Outcome 30 - Strengthened institutional capacity to develop innovative initiatives for regional cooperation and integration and for the generation and use of knowledge.**
SHADOW OUTCOME: Development effectiveness, impact and innovation of policy work and technical assistance in countries is increased.

UNDP mainly targeted its contributions through policy advice and technical support for countries to reduce poverty and inequality, and advance towards achievement of the MDGs, mostly through:

- The publication of reports on human development and the systematization and transfer of good practices;
- Support for initiatives to track progress towards the MDGs while developing and improving disaggregated data for better identifying and targeting vulnerable and excluded groups, as well as coordinating national and regional actors to promote public-private partnerships and responsible corporate citizenship;
- Helping to integrate economic and social policy to build innovative development strategies and policies which promote social cohesion, inclusive markets, human development and the relation between poverty and the environment; and
- Promoting policy dialogue and building capacity on social policy with government officials and social managers with special attention to countries and vulnerable groups that require intensive efforts to reach the MDGs.

Focus area 2: Democratic governance

In this area, UNDP planned to contribute towards two outcomes:

1. **Outcome 31 - Dialogue and participation, especially of women and children, youth, people with disabilities, people of African descent and indigenous groups, fostered.**
SHADOW OUTCOME: Widened awareness and debate on democracy and participatory public policies in favour of vulnerable populations and excluded groups.
2. **Outcome 32 - Accountability and transparency of public institutions strengthened effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability.**
SHADOW OUTCOME: Management capacities of public institutions strengthened at different levels, with increased access to and dissemination of knowledge, accountability and transparency.

UNDP targeted its contributions in this area on promoting inclusive participation, with an emphasis on the inclusion of women, youth, indigenous populations, and people of African descent, mainly through:

- Strengthening governing institutions with particular attention to countries in special political situations;
- Increasing transparency and accountability through institutional reform and incorporation of information systems;
- Supporting analysis and promoting policy dialogue, notably with the publication and wide dissemination of reports on democracy;
- Facilitating the systematization and dissemination of good practices on local governance;
- Helping to foster leadership and democratic values in youth; and
- Raising the capacities of political parties and political practitioners, notably women and young parliamentarians, and those from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, by sustaining their networks.

Focus area 3: Crisis prevention and recovery

In this area, UNDP planned to contribute towards four outcomes:

1. **Outcome 33 - Capacities of national institutions to manage crisis strengthened.** SHADOW OUTCOME: Strengthened capacities of national and local institutions to manage crisis.
2. **Outcome 34 - Regional, national and local capacities to assure citizen security including access to justice strengthened.** SHADOW OUTCOME: Strengthened regional, national, and local capacities to ensure citizen security.
3. **Outcome 35 - Joint border area development initiatives are strengthened. (One project)** SHADOW OUTCOME: Strengthened joint border area development initiatives and border conflicts peacefully resolved.
4. **Outcome 36 - Strengthened regional, national and local capacities to manage and mitigate the risks of disasters. (14 projects)** SHADOW OUTCOME: Strengthened regional, national and local capacities to manage and mitigate the risks of disasters.

UNDP focused its contributions in this area on promoting conflict and disaster risk reduction and strengthening management capabilities in the region, mainly through:

- Increasing institutional capacities to manage crisis, notably by supporting dialogue and consensus-building spaces, strengthening tools and systems and mainstreaming crisis prevention in development policies and programming.
- Specifically with regard to citizen security, the development of integrated programmes and instruments that promote an approach which emphasizes violence prevention, with particular attention to youth, and supporting the reform of police and judicial systems.

- In relation to the risk of natural disasters, supporting multi-country initiatives, and helping to develop policies and mechanisms for improved management while devoting particular attention to support recovery and development strategies in small islands.

Focus area 4: Environment and energy

In this area, UNDP planned to contribute towards two outcomes:

1. **Outcome 37 - Strategic ecosystems and biodiversity protected through the implementation of valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies. (Six projects)** SHADOW OUTCOME: Biodiversity protected through the implementation of valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies.
2. **Outcome 38 - Strengthened regional capacities to adapt to climate change and increase the use of renewable energy sources. (10 projects)** SHADOW OUTCOME: Strengthened national and regional, public and private-sector capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to respond to climate change, incorporate adaptation and mitigation in national planning and access climate finance.

UNDP targeted its contributions at protecting biodiversity and supporting mitigation and adaptation to climate change, mainly through:

- The development of advocacy reports on biodiversity and ecosystems services and their contribution to development;
- Promoting analysis and policy dialogue and providing advice on the threats and impacts of climate change and on measures that can be taken to mitigate its effects as well as initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Systematizing good practices; and

- Promoting the use of renewable energy sources with particular attention to poor rural areas.

Table 1 shows 189 projects aligned to these outcomes and the amount of resources executed during the period evaluated. About 88 percent of the portfolio was implemented in Latin America and 12 percent in the Caribbean.

REGIONAL PROGRAMME CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

The regional programme focuses on four specific cross-cutting practice areas that support the implementation of the programme and provide assistance to the different thematic areas and country offices. They are gender equality and mainstreaming; knowledge management; capacity development and South-South solutions; and HIV-AIDS. Monitoring and evaluation is not officially a cross-cutting area but an implementation arrangement that by its nature is cross-cutting to all areas. Further information on the work developed in these areas is discussed in the section below and subsequent chapters.

Cross-cutting area 1: Gender equality

RPD did not formally plan gender interventions. They are associated with specific outcomes, but the focus of RPD is more on women as a vulnerable group than on gender inequality/discrimination. Later in the cycle, a unit was created to support and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the region, particularly through:

- Generating knowledge, capacities, advocacy and alliances to underpin the incorporation of the gender-equality approach for human development policies;
- Providing strategic advisory services in alignment with the UNDP Global Gender Equality Strategy in LAC;
- Contributing to the development of policies on social protection and gender equality;
- Implementing gender certification mechanisms for organizations and companies;
- Advocating for the incorporation of a gender approach in state reform and public policies;
- Promoting citizen security with a gender focus, and laws and policies to eradicate violence against women;

Table 1. Number of Projects and Total Expenditure by Outcome

Regional Programme Outcome	Total Expenditure (US\$)	Number of Projects
Government policies and development plans effectively address HIV into poverty, protect human rights and gender equality of vulnerable and strengthen coordination of national responses.	5,376,771	19
Enhanced national capacities for MDG tracking with disaggregated data on vulnerable and excluded groups.	2,927,903	10
Increased knowledge and debate on human development and national capacities to integrate social and economic policies to reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion.	13,078,880	27
Development effectiveness, impact and innovation of policy work and technical assistance in countries is increased.	3,420,819	17
Widened awareness and debate on democracy and participatory public policies in favour of vulnerable populations and excluded groups.	12,809,513	43

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Regional Programme Outcome	Total Expenditure (US\$)	Number of Projects
Management capacities of public institutions strengthened at different levels, with increased access and dissemination of knowledge, accountability and transparency.	8,255,963	19
Strengthened capacities of national and local institutions to manage crisis.	2,432,332	10
Strengthened regional, national, and local capacities to ensure citizen security.	4,787,675	13
Strengthened joint border area development initiatives and border conflicts peacefully resolved.	35,000	1
Strengthened regional, national and local capacities to manage and mitigate the risks of disasters.	3,145,192	14
Biodiversity protected through the implementation of valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies.	5,083,451	6
Strengthened national and regional capacities of the public and private sectors to formulate and implement policies and programmes to respond to climate change, incorporate adaptation and mitigation in national planning and access climate finance.	6,608,336	10
Grand Total	67,961,834	189

Source: RSC, October 2012

- Enhancing capacities for the development of gender-focused disaster risk management and climate change mitigation strategies, policies and programmes.

Cross-cutting area 2: Knowledge management

This cross-cutting area is also recent and mostly provides support to the four main practice areas and, through them, to the country offices and other regional initiatives for the adoption of knowledge management approaches and methods through:

- Developing knowledge management strategies;
- Assisting in systematization and documentation of experiences and lessons;
- Designing and facilitating virtual and face-to-face spaces for exchange, transfer and adaptation of knowledge;
- Formulating transfer strategies, adaptation and use of knowledge.

Cross-cutting area 3: Capacity development and South-South solutions

The regional programme introduced capacity development and South-South solutions as cross-cutting themes in recognition of the need for mainstreaming and to step up efforts and support for country programmes to achieve the MDGs. UNDP's continuous research and analysis of good practices and lessons learned across countries, as well as its capacity assessment methodologies and response applications, were to facilitate common approaches and support national capacity development. As such, RSC has embraced capacity development and South-South solutions as part of its menu of services, and introduced a capacity development practice area to handle these in mid-2009. The practice area implements the regional programme through assistance to help transform attitudes, individuals and organizations. The goal is to better achieve development objectives by facilitating South-South solutions and promoting capacity development.

Cross-cutting area 4: HIV/AIDS

This area works in alignment with the three HIV- and health-related outcomes in UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and commitments in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Strategy Getting to Zero, and with UNDP's partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). There are three key action areas, as well as more specific service delivery areas described under each:

- Improving HIV and health outcomes through mainstreaming, gender and the MDGs;
- Improving HIV and health outcomes through attention to governance, human rights and vulnerable groups;
- Improving HIV and health outcomes through Global Fund implementation support and capacity development.

It must be noted that this area is closely associated with specific outcomes and will be assessed in Chapter 3 and not in Chapter 4 with the other cross-cutting areas.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is not exactly a cross-cutting area, but it does support and generate contributions to development in a cross-cutting way. Responding to a recommendation from the

Second Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF II) evaluation, an evaluation area was established in January 2010 to allow for an "improved system to incorporate RBM, including the recently approved monitoring and evaluation corporate guidelines".²⁴

The aim of the evaluation unit is to:

- support the strengthening of capacities for RBM, planning, monitoring and evaluation for results;
- enhance the quality and use of evaluations in the region;
- promote a knowledge database on evaluation through a regional CoP; and
- improve practices and the exchange of experiences on RBM and M&E at regional, national and local levels.

All areas are expected to perform in close coordination and support each other within a single and coherent vision and action framework. This will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

The agreements made in the management responses to previous evaluations (RCF II, regionalization and MTE) will also be examined in subsequent chapters. This evaluation of the current regional programme is to serve as input for the development of the next RCF to start in 2014.

²⁴ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP's Second Regional Cooperation Framework for Latin America and the Caribbean 2002-2006', New York, 2007.

CHAPTER 3.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Chapter 3 presents the analysis and main findings related to UNDP's contribution to the 12 outcomes of the regional programme. It must be noted that it is very difficult for policy makers, government officials, regional institutions, and often even for UNDP country offices to differentiate between the work of country, regional and global programmes. Mindful of this limitation, the assessment below is heavily based on the impression of a lack of distinction between the programmes. Given this challenge, much of the credit for the contributions identified below should be shared with the global programme and the country offices as well.

3.1 POVERTY AND INEQUALITY REDUCTION, AND MDG ACHIEVEMENT

Strengthened capabilities of governments to reduce poverty and inequality and promote inclusion, particularly for vulnerable and excluded groups. (Outcome 27)

RELEVANCE

This outcome was reformulated subsequent to MTE. The focus was tightened on the integration of gender and HIV/AIDS concerns. The new outcome – “Evidence-based laws, development and poverty reduction policies and plans

effectively address HIV and gender inequalities, prioritizing those most at risk, discriminated groups and most affected populations” – shifted the focus from poverty to gender and HIV in relation to poverty and inequality. The analysis in this section will mostly consider the final revised outcome given that the poverty reduction and inequality dimensions of the original outcome are also covered in outcome 29.²⁵

The gender focus of this outcome is aligned with the UNDP Gender Strategy 2008-2011. The new gender practice area's contribution to this outcome was relevant and unpacked broad concepts of ‘poverty and inequality’ and ‘promoting inclusion’ to focus on more concrete gender objectives aligned with the Quito Consensus²⁶. In this regard, it worked towards adopting measures in economic and social areas to ensure the recognition of unpaid work; formulating and applying State policies conducive to the equitable sharing of family responsibilities by women and men; developing instruments, especially time-use surveys, for periodically measuring unpaid work performed by women and men; and supporting national mechanisms for the advancement of women within State governments.

The HIV/AIDS part of the outcome is aligned with part of the HIV/AIDS team's mandate, in particular, with integrating HIV/AIDS concerns

²⁵ The Market, the State and the Dynamics of Inequality project and Poverty, Equity and Macroeconomic Policy project are included under outcome 27 in Atlas, but in the evaluation are analysed under outcome 29, which maintains the poverty reduction and inequality scope to which these two projects were designed to contribute.

²⁶ Governments of the countries participating in the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Quito, 2007 agreed to adopt measures to ensure gender equity and women's empowerment.

into national development processes and promoting human rights and gender equality, which are two of the four priority areas set out in the UNDP Strategic Plan. The HIV/AIDS part of the outcome is also in line with development planning and mainstreaming, which together with law, human rights, gender and sexual diversity and governance of AIDS responses, are the dimensions entrusted to UNDP within the UNAIDS division of labour.

The relevance of this outcome has been adversely affected by two factors. The first is that this outcome and RPD as a whole, despite the HIV/AIDS team efforts to make area visible in the results framework, are still far from reflecting the entire scope of the regional programme's HIV/AIDS work. Even when added to the scope of outcome 31 (the other outcome associated with HIV/AIDS), a large part of the HIV/AIDS team's work is still not visible in the RPD results framework. For instance, implementation of global initiatives at a regional and national level, an important part of the HIV/AIDS team workload, is only reflected in a tangential manner; and the work done with the Global Fund²⁷, a considerable part of the resources allocated to activities with the Global Commission on HIV and the Law²⁸, and supported initiatives on human rights, are not included. The second factor is that beyond the work undertaken regionally by the HIV/AIDS Unit to assist UNDP country offices, *incorporating HIV into national strategies* is a nationally driven process, and demand from country offices in this regard was low during the period.

Moreover, the essence of the regional strategy, a human rights-based approach to the epidemics²⁹, cannot be inferred from the results framework. Actually, a rights-based approach calls for a change in the traditional manner in which HIV

results are showcased. In this context reflecting it as a cross-cutting aspect to be mainstreamed does not convey its relevance to the region's challenges and needs.

The HIV/AIDS programme, beyond the narrow result frame confined in outcome 27, has been flexible enough to respond to the evolving needs of the region to a good extent. The HIV/AIDS team has played an important role in this regard in a scenario characterized by the lack of installed capacity in most country offices. The work performed by the area of HIV/AIDS is perceived to add value by country offices, other UN agencies and civil society organizations. Some of the factors behind this are that the area has knowledge of the particularities of the Latin American region; a deep understanding of the implications of working with a sexual diversity mandate; a high level of commitment and involvement; a good level of technical expertise; and an intervention strategy based on regular accompaniment and support to partners (as opposed to one-off support actions). Main players in the region see the HIV/AIDS team as a strategic ally. The focus on the Caribbean countries has been a priority for the HIV area; since 2009 a staff member was selected to assist the Caribbean region, a position that was maintained until the decision was made in New York to eliminate the subregional office in Trinidad and Tobago. Caribbean HIV focal points were trained in 2009 and 2010, and funds were made available to countries from the regional budget as well as through the thematic trust fund. However, implementation of these funds has been slowed either by recurrent staff turnover or by the absence of focal points in the country offices. In spite of the efforts of RSC, this situation adversely affected the degree of responsiveness and added value of the actual programme in the Caribbean.

²⁷ For example, support and technical assistance was provided to Uruguay and Belize country offices and to several regional networks with the presentation of proposal for Round 10 of the Global Fund.

²⁸ Launched in June 2010 by UNDP with the support of the UNAIDS Secretariat.

²⁹ This is because the root causes of the epidemic in the LAC region are associated with weak human rights legal framework protecting the vulnerable and excluded populations that concentrate the epidemic in terms of HIV prevalence and incidence.

EFFECTIVENESS

As this outcome features a double focus on gender and HIV/AIDS, the degree of effectiveness has been different as analysed separately below.

GENDER – OUTCOME-LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS

The development of new strategic knowledge products³⁰, and the provision of technical assistance, has strengthened governmental capacities to reduce poverty and gender inequality in a significant number of countries in the region, placing in the national agendas issues such as the importance of public policies promoting reconciliation between work and family with co-responsibility; the importance of time deficit and the need to review social protection policies from a gender perspective. This has happened most noticeably in Mexico, Uruguay, Peru, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Panama and Paraguay. In Uruguay, a number of interventions sparked by the report ‘Work and Family’ led to the creation of the Integral National Care System.³¹ In the Dominican Republic, these knowledge products and assistances have contributed directly to a gender analysis of the national programme ‘Solidaridad’ linked to the Social Protection Department of the Presidency of the country. In the rest of the countries, significant issues were placed in the national agendas such as the importance of public policies promoting reconciliation between work and family with co-responsibility; the importance of time deficit, and the need to review social protection policies from a gender perspective.

A number of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in the region have strengthened their capacities through the contribution of the regional programme. A noteworthy

example has been the Ministry of Women in the Dominican Republic, which remains a separate entity contrary to the initial plans of the Government thanks to, among other contributions, a civil society campaign directly supported by UNDP and for which the inputs of RSC were key. A similar example was found in the Mexican state of Zacatecas.

Also, a significant number of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been particularly strengthened in the area of employment and gender within the framework of the regional programme initiative Gender Seal. Memoranda of understanding have been signed with Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay, Panama and the Dominican Republic and extended to 12 countries in 2012.

HIV/AIDS – OUTCOME-LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS

The essence of the planned achievements as expressed in the revised indicators was to support countries in (a) integrating gender and HIV concerns into national development processes³², (b) improving national AIDS governance; and (c) initiating changes to punitive HIV-related legislation and policy. In this framework, the contributions of the regional programme’s HIV/AIDS initiatives to this outcome have been low: there was limited demand from country offices for RSC to support the integration of HIV concerns into poverty reduction strategies and development plans, and the focal points for HIV/AIDS had limited involvement in UNDAF processes.

One of the few visible achievements during the period was the inclusion of HIV/AIDS concerns in Grenada’s Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2012-2016. However, this was the result

³⁰ Most significantly, the report ‘Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-Responsibility’.

³¹ <<http://www.sistemadecuidados.gub.uy/>>.

³² The only indicator on HIV in the original results framework is included in this one. The original indicator is “Poverty reduction strategies include specific objectives for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS”.

of a joint effort that included the RSC team to a very limited extent. The regional programme provided financial support for an impact assessment³³ some of the findings of which were an input to the strategy. That said, major contributors to this success were UNDP Barbados and OECS Poverty Reduction Programme Unit³⁴ and the BDP HIV/AIDS Group, which was involved in conceiving the approach. Another contribution happened in Argentina, where the programme supported a study on vulnerability and problems of access to healthcare³⁵ that was used by the Ministry of Health to develop an HIV/AIDS vulnerability reduction policy for sexual minorities in several areas of the country³⁶.

The regional programme has contributed indirectly to the integration of HIV concerns into national development processes by means of supporting UNAIDS partners. Technical and networking-related support³⁷ to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) regional office, since its inception, has been recognized as a contributing factor to the successes of the organization in the region, e.g. the preparation of a decree to reform prison healthcare in Colombia and an increase in resource allocation for prisoners in LAC³⁸.

The support provided for regional and national dialogues, advocacy tools for HIV and the law and support to traditionally excluded groups

in the Organization of American States (see outcome 31 for more information) have led to important steps forward and are paving the way for achievements in terms of changes in punitive laws and improving AIDS governance at national level. However, tangible achievements have not happened yet given that HIV/AIDS-supported processes are at incipient-to-intermediate stages and even if outcomes unfold as expected, these will still take a few years.³⁹

In Argentina, for example, the comparative legislative review⁴⁰ conducted by the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development and funded by RSC was formally presented to the National Congress and subsequently used in a workshop for judiciary officials and civil society. This process opened a debate centred on a rights-based approach in a context where HIV/AIDS had never been openly discussed, and paved the way for debate on the gender identity law in Congress. In Panama, the regional programme has prompted the buy-in of the judiciary – which is taking the lead in the preparatory steps for the revision of the HIV law – and its interaction with civil society for the first time. Given a starting point where HIV was not even on the agenda, this is a solid intermediate step towards the revision of the law. In Belize, the national dialogue’s action plan, to which the regional programme contributed, incorporates actions for changes on punitive HIV-related

³³ “Socio-economic impact assessment on the causes and consequences of AIDS in Grenada” (2010).

³⁴ The programme produced outputs such as guidelines for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategy papers for Grenada.

³⁵ “Condiciones de vulnerabilidad al VIH/sida e ITS y problemas de acceso a la atención de la salud en personas homosexuales, bisexuales y trans en la Argentina. 2009”.

³⁶ <http://www.msal.gov.ar/sida/inves_informes.html>.

³⁷ Technical assistance in drafting UNODC diagnostics for HIV in prisons in LAC and networking support to carry out national consultations on HIV and prisons, as the basis for establishing penitentiary health policies.

³⁸ <<http://m.eltiempo.com/vida-de-hoy/salud/se-prepara-decreto-para-reformar-la-atencion-de-salud-en-las-carceles/12036030/1/home>>; and p. 2, World Bank report ‘Improving Resource Efficiency of National AIDS Strategies in Eight Latin American Countries’.

³⁹ In this regard, targets were formulated bearing in mind the end of the process (outcome) rather than the end of the results framework. Moreover, there is still one year left before the end of programme.

⁴⁰ ‘Comparative HIV Legislative Review in Latin America and the Caribbean from a Human Rights Perspective. Argentina. (February 2010)’. Original in Spanish: ‘Legislación comparada de VIH en América Latina y el Caribe desde una perspectiva de Derechos Humanos. Argentina.’

legislation. However, the lack of follow-up on the action plan (see outcome 31) is hindering effects in this regard.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, intermediate advances like those described for Latin American countries are less evident. However, given the baseline situation in the region, the successful undertaking of a regional dialogue on HIV and the law and the production of the comparative legislative review may be considered important advances⁴¹.

EFFICIENCY

Several aspects related to lack of installed capacity at the country office level have hampered efficiency and made implementation and follow-up more difficult. The first is insufficient human resources: a focal point often does not allow for the type of coverage and intensity of work planned in the HIV programme⁴². This is especially pressing in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Some country offices have difficulty establishing a mandate on HIV/AIDS with a focus on sexual diversity, and the level of expertise and acceptance within country offices is often inadequate to work efficiently with men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender communities. In addition, focal points tend not to have sufficient technical or political weight within the country office structure. Often they are consultants and their hierarchical level makes it difficult for them to push issues forward.

The RSC team has made efforts to intervene in order to mitigate, at least partially, the consequences of these resource and capacity deficiencies by providing additional support, e.g. technical assistance, strategic guidance, linking focal points to relevant civil society organizations in the country. The downside of this strategy is that it can be detrimental to country offices' ownership and, in turn, to the implementation of follow-up actions.

One significant challenge is that the UNDP Global Project Document for HIV/AIDS, the main reference document for the regional programme, requires cross collaboration with other practice areas at RSC⁴³ but financial-administrative arrangements related to sources of funding and UNDP processes prevent this from happening. The HIV programme is expected to foster joint work but it cannot pay for the services rendered by other practice units that apply cost-recovering mechanisms in a context where the activities of other areas are mostly linked to projects and their ability to fund cross-collaboration initiatives is very limited.

The RSC team has been attentive of possibilities for partnerships and alliances by establishing collaborative links with other agencies and institutions beyond target beneficiaries (e.g. UNAIDS partners, REDCA⁴⁴). This has led to regular coordination and has contributed to the quality of events.

A considerable part of the workload of the HIV/AIDS team during the first year after its inception was the development of a regional

⁴¹ HIV was not addressed at a national level due to socio-political and religious resistances and taboos towards sexual diversity issues.

⁴² When the HIV/AIDS programme started in 2010 there were only two focal points. The number has increased over the last two years, but when they take positions, they are not always acquainted with the HIV/AIDS technical and institutional framework in the country.

⁴³ The document 'Policy, Leadership and Technical Support to Address Development Dimensions of HIV and Health' establishes on p. 10 that "Cross-practice collaboration and partnerships at the global and regional levels will include the poverty, governance, crisis prevention and recovery, gender, and capacity development practices and teams".

⁴⁴ Central American Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.

strategy⁴⁵, which entailed a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process and was signed by the 12 directors of UNAIDS agencies. The strategy is used and promoted by UNAIDS⁴⁶ and it was utilized by UNDP in seven countries for the preparation and drafting of Global Fund proposals. However, it was never translated into an UNAIDS operational plan serving as a joint planning framework⁴⁷, nor as an advocacy tool (dissemination was not sufficient), which were the purposes originally intended for the document.

SUSTAINABILITY

Even if HIV/AIDS were integrated into policies and plans, there are no clear follow-up mechanisms to ensure that this transcends policy documents in practice, which is what would be required to verify whether the contributions to the outcome were sustainable.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, sustainability is even more challenging and follow-up by local actors of regional programme actions is almost non-existent. The aforementioned low baseline could be an explanatory factor. Other explanations could be that the HIV and the policy dialogue model did not fit the particularities of the regional context.⁴⁸ Political will is an external factor that poses risks to the sustainability of processes being started by the regional programme.

An aspect that offers good prospects for sustainability is that a comparative legislative

review will be updated in 2013 and will include additional countries in the mapping. Moreover, the HIV/AIDS team has the clear intention of using the comparative review to guide future actions.

Improved MDG tracking through enhanced national capacity to generate and use indicators and data disaggregated for vulnerable and excluded groups. (Outcome 28)

RELEVANCE

The goal of enhancing national capacities for MDG tracking is relevant as it is fully aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan⁴⁹, and some programme interventions have meant relevant contributions to the outcome. MDG and poverty research papers for public policy produced since 2009 have provided robust analysis of the evolution of the MDGs, as well as on particular aspects such as the effects of the financial and economic crisis and shocks on the achievement of the MDGs. They have provided timely analytical information related to the MDGs, and thus an indirect manner of tracking the MDGs through enhanced capacity. Activities carried out by the MDG Unit⁵⁰ within RSC – such as the MDG in LAC Bulletins, the annual meetings of the CoP on the MDGs and the MDG Reports Observatory – are also relevant. However, in some of the cases, their link to enhancing national capacities for MDG tracking is indirect and rather loose. They are rather direct contributions

⁴⁵ The LAC Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Responses to HIV for Gay Men, other MSM and Trans People: Universal Access – From Vulnerability to Resilience, September 2010.

⁴⁶ It was used extensively in a recent (April 2012) compilation of case studies on experiences of trans organizations jointly developed by UNAIDS, REDLACTRANS and the HIV/AIDS Alliance. See <<http://www.onusida-latina.org/images/2012/junio/ConstruyendoCompilacion.pdf>>.

⁴⁷ The consequences of this have been partly reversed by the fact that the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework has stigma and discrimination as one its areas.

⁴⁸ For example, at the time of the dialogue several political actors were facing elections, with the subsequent resistance to changes on social policies; within the Caribbean political models and approaches to social policy vary substantially, yet the dialogue did not take into account such specificities (subregional approach).

⁴⁹ Which emphasizes the need to collect quality data, monitor progress towards the goals and direct resources to where they are most needed. See paragraph 30 of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

⁵⁰ The unit is located at RSC and it is part of RBLAC's poverty, human development and MDG cluster.

to UNDP's national/regional internal capacity to track MDG progress (such contributions are not reflected in the results framework).

Beyond the aforementioned observatory, the regional programme did not undertake any initiative to promote the use of the MDG Reports (MDGR) and National Human Development Reports (NHDR) as mechanisms to monitor the assessment of human development through the MDGs.⁵¹ The focus on support to civil society organizations (CSOs) for MDG tracking reflected in the original results framework did not translate into any targeted initiatives; work has concentrated in the country offices and the Government, with the exception of the MDG Acceleration Framework, where CSOs are part of the process.

The initiative within the MDG portfolio with the greatest practical alignment to this outcome has been MAF. This is a methodological framework that features a conceptual approach as well as a concrete toolkit aimed at accelerating progress at country level, on those MDGs unlikely to be achieved by 2015.⁵² MAF complements national processes by helping to identify actions and actors who could work together to speed up progress towards the identified MDG, and in this regard, it implies a direct contribution to enhancing national capacity for MDG tracking. The application of MAF has also helped draw attention to vulnerable groups within countries and to move beyond national averages that hide the plight of vulnerable and excluded groups. Moreover, the intrinsic flexibility of MAF as a tool has made it very suitable to adapt to the evolving and heterogeneous needs of the region in terms of achieving MDGs.

EFFECTIVENESS

Most of the clear and tangible evidence of effective contributions to *enhanced national capacities for MDG tracking* are associated with the application of MAF. In the case of MAF, there is a clear line of contribution between the intervention of the MDG support team (BDP and RSC) and the achievement of outcomes, given that the generation of MAF-related processes would not have happened without the accompaniment of the team⁵³. In several countries⁵⁴ MAF has generated nationally led and owned action plans, identifying bottlenecks in MDG achievement and a series of solutions to overcome them. In this regard, MAF is a clear example of enhancing national capacities for MDG tracking. All action plans are being implemented with the exception of Peru, where the process to accelerate progress on the reduction of maternal mortality came to a halt due to the Cusco regional government backing down, as funding of the action plan became an issue.

In Colombia, the regional programme team had a key role in accompanying the process of developing the action plan in four country departments as well as in promoting the experience (the country's president presented it at a UN Assembly). Later on, 76 MDG-acceleration plans targeting high-priority goals were developed at the municipal level, the level directly responsible for providing services that are critical to MDG achievement. MAF acted as a mechanism to monitor and assess inequalities that could only be addressed from a local perspective.

In Belize, the action plan did not only serve to track MDG progress but also became the umbrella guiding interventions designed to

⁵¹ This was one of the intended targets for this outcome in the regional programme document.

⁵² "The MDG Acceleration Framework steps provide a systematic methodology and toolkit to help identify and prioritize bottlenecks to MDG progress, select near-term 'acceleration' solutions to these bottlenecks, and create a comprehensive implementation plan to accelerate progress on the ground" (p. 27 of the MDG Acceleration Framework, November 2011).

⁵³ All the country offices and government counterparts interviewed during the evaluation expressed it that way.

⁵⁴ For example, Colombia, Belize, Costa Rica and Peru.

accelerate the achievement of MDG-7's water and sanitation indicators. The Water Governance project⁵⁵, funded by the UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, propelled the Country Action Plan (July 2011) into action and the recently launched global change adaptation project is guided by the action plan and linked with what the governance project has already done. Effective enhancement of MDG tracking capacity in Belize has not been the result of MAF alone but rather of a collaborative process involving several UNDP global, regional and national teams and instruments, including the RSC Capacity Development Unit, which conducted an institutional capacity assessment of the Ministry of Rural Development as the organization with the mandate to deal with water and sanitation issues.

MAF has also implied MDG tracking with a focus on discriminated and excluded groups. In Costa Rica, for example, the focus was placed on accelerating the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people (target 1.B), with an emphasis on access to employment of the population with disabilities, whose unemployment rates and difficulties to find decent and productive employment were higher than the national average. The result of the process was the recent publication of the 'National Plan for the Labour Insertion of the Population with Disabilities in Costa Rica' of September 2012, an action plan under implementation. In Chile, the application of the MAF methodology led to the development and launching – in July 2012 – of the 'Multispectral Public Policy to Respond to HIV, AIDS and STD in the Arica and Parinacota Region'.

Further MAF contributions to this outcome before the completion of the regional programme in 2013 are likely given the ongoing processes

in El Salvador (child and maternal health), in Dominica and Grenada, where the diagnostic is undergoing and targets will be identified soon, and in Venezuela, where the country office is considering the application of the methodology in the UNDAF process.

The main success factors that explain the high degree of contribution of MAF to the achievement of this outcome are:

- 1) It is practical – it provides a hands-on instrument to find distinct solutions to specific problems;
- 2) It is demand-driven – it follows an inclusive participatory approach and is nationally led. This results in solid levels of ownership because identification of bottlenecks, prioritization and solutions are the result of negotiated processes among national stakeholders;
- 3) It is inclusive – it follows a partnership approach, both within UNDP and between UNDP and national counterparts. Within UNDP, MAF is a good example of efficient and effective inter-team collaboration involving BDP, RSC and country offices. At a national level it is a clear example of a partnership approach in which UNDP offers methodological and technical support while facilitating and accompanying the process and the national counterparts assume the funding⁵⁶ and implementation of the action plan.
- 4) It is efficient – it uses expertise that is available within UNDP as opposed to hiring external consultants. This is perceived as an added value by national counterparts and brings a higher sense of partnership.
- 5) It is complementary – MAF processes are examples of cases in which the results pursued

⁵⁵ See <<http://www.pnud.or.cr/images/stories/Plan20Nacional2020Insercion20Laboral20Pd20final.pdf>>.

⁵⁶ UNDP may assist with the mobilization of funding as part of the accompaniment, but the responsibility for funding the implementation of the plan is on the national side.

by the regional programme complement the results pursued by the country offices and national counterparts. This is actually one of the factors explaining the existence of genuine incentives in the approach for all parties and the subsequent high levels of ownership.

Besides MAF, another clear contribution of the regional programme to enhancing national capacities for MDG tracking can be found in the State of Chiapas in Mexico. Continued technical assistance from RSC's MDG Support Unit in the development of baseline indicators for the MDG M&E system in Chiapas, and an eight-month Virtual School course for planning officers about MDG are recognized as some of the contributing factors to a clearly increased capacity for MDG tracking and mainstreaming. Today, the Chiapas Development Plan⁵⁷ is not only aligned to MDG but also audited against MDG on a regular basis, and the Planning Directorate has established a web-based monitoring system to track progress on MDG achievement at state and local level.

The MDG Reports Observatory for LAC (MROL) was developed responding to a concern that MDG progress reports were not being used to monitor and assess human development through MDGs.⁵⁸ The observatory is a relevant tool that allows access to information that otherwise would be dispersed and time consuming to collect, and qualifies as a mechanism to monitor and assess human development through the MDGs, one of the revised targets for this outcome. Some offices find it useful as a source for presentations to CSOs and NGOs (Venezuela) and as source of information for meetings with the Government (Peru), but its

use is not widespread among country offices in the region yet and there is no clear evidence of it having enhanced national capacities for MDG tracking. Disparities between the observatory data and other reference sources deter some country office from using the tool.⁵⁹

The regional programme has focused extensively on providing resources to enhance the country offices' capacity to provide assistance on MDG tracking to national partners. This responds to the service provision logic of RSC and represents, in the best of cases, an indirect/intermediate contribution to enhancing national capacities that is not reflected in the regional results framework. The observatory, the inventory of best practices on MDG in LAC, the MDG CoP and the MDG in LAC Bulletins are resources as well as continued data and information channels for country offices on the MDGs. The wealth of online interactive data has allowed several country offices to be aware of regional debates on MDGs, get acquainted with the experiences of other countries, gain exposure for their own experiences and provide data to governments and other national counterparts when required.

EFFICIENCY

There have been no major stumbling blocks in implementation and the programme has featured a series of favourable elements in terms of efficiency. There has been a good degree of coordination between the poverty group at BDP, RBLAC, RSC and country offices in the context of MAF. The first two have worked as a joint team while building on each other's comparative advantages on the basis of an efficient division of labour, one of the main factors behind the good

⁵⁷ 'Plan de Desarrollo Chiapas Solidario 2007-2010'.

⁵⁸ This evaluation found a number of recurrent factors explaining the underuse of MDGR when that occurs: (i) the reports tend to be far too academic, not accessible as instruments to guide and inform public policy; (ii) they are not designed as monitoring tools but rather as accountability tools, i.e. the report itself is considered a monitoring element even if it is not subsequently used and does not prompt action; and (iii) shifts in government and staff turnover within relevant government institutions lead to gaps in institutional memory and lack of ownership, e.g. the users of the report are different from those who commissioned it.

⁵⁹ In some countries, the fact that observatory data diverge too much from ECLAC (for extreme poverty – MDG 1 – difference could be as twice as much) is a limiting factor for the country office to use the tool.

degree of efficiency and success of the various MAF initiatives implemented. RSC played a key role in identifying and assessing quality requests from countries, filtering expectations and ensuring ownership; BDP's poverty group played a major role in transferring and applying the methodology, and country offices' MDG focal points had a core role in ensuring coordination and participation of national institutions.

One indicator of this efficient and effective coordination is that all the action plans resulting from formal MAF processes in LAC have been signed. Joint MAF teams had an important role in mobilizing resources for seed funding to start MAF and link the implementation of action plans with other donors. This has also been a determining factor behind the smooth implementation of MAF initiatives in the region.

The MDG CoP for the LAC region has played a key informative and corporate role in the regional programme. The CoP has been a main channel for country offices to get acquainted with what other offices were doing and has led to exchanges of experiences and practical knowledge.⁶⁰ The fact that the annual meetings of the MDG CoP for the LAC region could not take place in 2012 due to lack of funds is a setback in this regard. There is a virtual platform for sharing information and interacting with colleagues in the MDG in LAC CoP by means of Teamworks, but group meetings are still perceived by country offices as the most effective way for being informed, networking and exchanging experiences.

Although RSC had a proactive collaborative attitude towards the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F), this was on an informal basis and no strategic collaboration framework was developed. This meant missed opportunities for maximizing synergies, such as exploring possibilities for data sharing⁶¹; links between MGD-F projects

and MDG regional and national reports, and ultimately, exploring mechanisms to monitor and assess human development through the MDGs. Exploring such synergies would have been highly desirable in a context where most country offices' poverty-related portfolios during the period were associated with MDG-related projects and programmes.

MROL is a good example of an efficiency-driven communication tool, as it allows immediate access to information that would otherwise be dispersed and time consuming to collect. It offers an alternative to having to read all MDG reports in the region to obtain a snapshot of the situation of a given country within the region.

According to Atlas, the portfolio associated with outcome 28 amounts to USD 2 million, and the vast majority of these funds are not related to MAF, which accounts for the most substantial and direct contributions to enhancing national capacities for MDG tracking. This casts doubts on the cost-efficiency of the portfolio not linked to MAF.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of most of the outputs produced under this outcome (research working papers, informational and communications tools) is limited by nature given that the time-frame for achievement of MDG expires in 2015. The shelf life of research papers will not outlive the regional programme. That said, UNDP is part of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and one of the tasks of the team is to evaluate the experience with the MDG framework both in terms of contents and processes. The outputs and achievements under outcome 28 may well be incorporated in this process, which would make the contribution sustainable.

⁶⁰ The poverty area in the Colombia country office, for example, used the poverty maps produced in El Salvador as one of the reference instruments to validate poverty maps in Colombia as a tool for public policy.

⁶¹ For example, how country offices in the region could have used the vast array of baseline data generated by MDG-F projects, or the possibility of joint outcome evaluations involving MDG-F and the regional programme.

The MAF methodology incorporates sustainability considerations from the onset by emphasizing realistic approaches and ownership. Moreover, action plans respond to the practical implementation of national policies and programmes that integrate MDG acceleration solutions and therefore make the contributions of the regional programme sustainable.

Strengthened capacities of national institutions to integrate social and economic policies for the reduction of poverty and inequality. (Outcome 29)

RELEVANCE

UNDP's intended contribution to this outcome was very relevant for the LAC region, where levels of inequality remains the highest in the world and its persistence constitute a key challenge in reducing poverty. The formulation of the shadow and revised outcome resulting from MTE "increased knowledge and debate on human development and national capacities to integrate social and economic policies to reduced poverty, inequalities and exclusion" incorporated a level of detail that made this outcome even more relevant for two reasons. First, it incorporated some of the key elements that define the overall direction for UNDP operations in support to programme countries in the poverty focus area, as defined in UNDP's Strategic Plan: to provide knowledge, policy advice, and capacity development to propel changes in human development. Second, it also incorporated the use of knowledge a main element of the UNDP business model as well as one of its comparative advantages.⁶²

The areas covered by the poverty practice team⁶³ portfolio during the period have also been relevant to the challenges of the region and well aligned to the UNDP mandate and strategy. The *inclusive development* part of the portfolio is a move towards policy advice that balances inclusiveness and distributional concerns with macro-stability, economic growth, and fiscal sustainability, an issue specifically pursued by the Strategic Plan⁶⁴.

The poverty-related portfolio has gone beyond reflecting the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region: it has actually deepened some of them (e.g. poverty and inequality) and has put them in the centre of the regional and national debates (see effectiveness). HDRs and research papers for public policy generated and influenced the direction of relevant debates such as the dynamics and transmission of inequality, the metrics of poverty and the effects of the economic crisis on MDGs. The work on fiscal micro-simulation and analysis of progressive social and fiscal policies was a pioneering initiative in the region. The large amount of public policy research was in line with reversing the shortcomings pointed out by the evaluation of the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) 2002-2006⁶⁵: producing high-quality academic research on poverty and inequality.

The knowledge generated has been relevant for UNDP external actors (academia, governments, civil society) in terms of incorporations in the debate. However, it has not been as relevant for country offices for two reasons. First, because of the absence of a clear and jointly designed advocacy sequence linking these knowledge

⁶² See paragraphs 3 and 28 (e) of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 respectively.

⁶³ By poverty cluster, we designate the poverty reduction, MDG and human development area of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. This cluster's portfolio is the major contributor to outcome 29.

⁶⁴ See paragraph 27, section B (building on lessons learned), UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

⁶⁵ See Chapter 3, p. 15: "(...) as many Latin American countries lack adequate technical capacity to perform research and generate knowledge in this area. In some cases, analytic possibilities are restricted by data availability, and high-quality academic research on these issues (poverty and inequality reduction) has not been particularly abundant even when data was available. Proactive efforts to improve the quality of research and to stimulate additional research and knowledge generation are unquestionably needed in the region".

products with country offices work on public policy advice; and second, country offices have felt the absence of practical instruments assisting them to *increase the capacities of national institutions*. In this regard, there have been obstacles in fulfilling the UNDP Strategic Plan's demand to "(...) bring corporate and regional policy and advisory support closer to where they are needed on the ground, and to make those services more responsive to country programme needs (...) that will entail (...) tailoring its services (advocacy, policy and advisory, and technical support) to the specific needs of programme countries⁶⁶". The reasons behind this and the current steps being taken by the regional poverty practice area to reverse this situation are explained under the effectiveness and sustainability sections.

With regard to gender, the formulation of the outcome presented a narrow entry point to focus on the Quito objective: "Formulating policies and programmes for providing quality employment and social security and economic incentives designed to guarantee decent paid work to women on equal conditions with men, in order to ensure their autonomy and the full exercise of their rights in the region".

EFFECTIVENESS

Contributions to the achievement of this outcome as analysed proved effective in terms of increased knowledge and debate on human development. In terms of *increased national capacities to integrate social and economic policies to reduce poverty, inequality and exclusion*, intended outcomes have been achieved in the area of gender inequality but only to a limited extent in the poverty area.

Evidences of the poverty focus area within the regional programme having contributed to increasing knowledge on human development are widespread and noticeable. The breadth, depth, volume and quality of human development knowledge generated over the period have

been noteworthy. Significant knowledge has been created and there were considerable improvements in the accessibility, usability, coverage and reach of such knowledge. Increases in knowledge are explained, to a great extent, by four regionally specific elements: the Virtual School, *Humanum* (the Latin American human development journal), the production of knowledge products related to research (working papers, books, regional HDRs), and the community of practice networks (the LAC human development network) although to a lesser extent and more at an internal level. The link between the creation of knowledge and the use and application of such knowledge to increase national capacities related to integrate policies to reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion (a core element of UNDP's business model) has only occurred to a very limited extent. This has been due to lack of use of knowledge products in policy advocacy and advice at country office level (see end of this section for further details).

The institutional development and expansion of the Virtual School during the period had an instrumental role in making HD knowledge accessible and ready for practical use. A key feature in this regard is that the school compiles human development knowledge generated by UNDP in the region and translates conceptual frameworks and research into learning. The school – a mere online course back in 2005 – is now fully integrated into the regional programme and covers 32 themes and over 4,500 people have participated in their courses since its inception⁶⁷, 30 percent of which were Latin American civil servants at national and local levels.

There are a number of factors behind the Virtual School's contribution to increasing knowledge and debate on human development. During this period, the school moved from offering open standard supply-driven courses to adapted demand-driven courses that accompany the implementation of UNDP projects in the field.

⁶⁶ See paragraph 28 (d), under UNDP Business Model, in section C.

⁶⁷ 80 percent of them participated in the school course during the period analysed (2008-2012).

This meant an important step in terms of transferring and adapting relevant knowledge. The school features a variety of delivery mechanisms, including virtual courses, face-to-face teaching, semi-face-to-face courses and self-taught courses. Virtual courses feature the use of forums, which enable participants and teachers to debate the theoretical and practical implications of HD approaches. Moreover, the main target groups of the school are national counterpart governments' civil servants, UN civil servants, university students, development practitioners, researchers and teachers, members of social organizations and political parties, politicians, journalists and the media. This group matches the objective of increasing debate and has the potential for increasing national capacities for (policy) action. The school has had an important role in integrating the concept of human development into other practice areas, thereby addressing one of the key recommendations made in the evaluation of UNDP's Second RCF 2002-2006.⁶⁸

The virtual Human Development Documentation Centre launched by the school in April 2011 is a clear contribution to enhanced accessibility and use of the vast wealth of knowledge contained in HDRs. The centre compiles systematized information on HDRs⁶⁹ and features a search engine that offers a range of alternatives to access the information contained in the HDRs. Over the last two years, the use of the centre has grown considerably, with average monthly visits doubling between 2011 and 2012.⁷⁰ This in a

context where promotional efforts to make the centre more visible have not yet taken place – although they could be highly profitable in terms of increased knowledge.

Cybermetric analysis conducted for this evaluation indicates a significant positioning of the Virtual School website as a knowledge platform both within and outside the regional programme. Data reveal that the school (escuelapnud.org) is the most referenced platform out of all the regional platforms analysed. Moreover, the school website is the third most influential platform within the network of platforms (analysed) associated with to the regional programme.⁷¹

The school offers the possibility of transforming knowledge and debate on human development into national capacities that could result in the integration of social policies to reduce poverty. However, it is not possible to know the extent to which the learning processes associated with the Virtual School result in the application of knowledge and increased capacity⁷², because this is not measured by any of the actors involved: the projects in which the courses are inserted, recipient organizations and the Virtual School⁷³ do not have impact monitoring mechanisms. This finding is in line with one of the overall conclusions of the recent evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction, which points to the widespread absence of adequate support to learn from its interventions about what works and why.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ "Keep the knowledge generation effort applied to policy advice, integrating the concept of human development into other practice areas as a guiding framework. Knowledge generation is a key UNDP goal, and policy relevance of all programmes is critical to the countries in the region. Integration of the human development framework into other areas will substantially augment the UNDP position as an important participant in regional development".

⁶⁹ <<http://www.centrodesarrollohumano.org/>>.

⁷⁰ From an average 2,405 monthly visits in 2011 to 4,582 in 2012.

⁷¹ See Figure 1 in Annex 5 online: <<http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>>. This figure portrays the in-degree metric, which assumes that the platforms that receive the most links from others are the most influential. The sizes of the circles reflect how influential they are.

⁷² Sample interviews revealed anecdotal evidence that the school's learning processes at times result in application of knowledge and increased capacity for better policy-making but at times they do not or it is unclear whether they do or not.

⁷³ The school management consider that outcomes should be measured by the user organizations, which is a valid argument.

⁷⁴ See Conclusion 3 in UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to Poverty Reduction', New York, September 2012.

Humanum is also playing an increasing role in terms of making human development available and readily accessible and promoting debate on human development. The journal is regarded as an effective mechanism to disseminate conceptual contributions of the national and regional HDRs and allows country offices to be connected with regional debates on human development, poverty and inequality. This role has become more prominent as *Humanum* evolved from a repository of academic research to an institutional web page targeted mainly at human development teams, and ultimately (since March 2012) to an external communications tool targeted at both internal (UNDP) and external users (academia, civil society, civil servants). The journal contains all knowledge products generated during the period. Data on outreach and the incorporation of social networks into the platform indicate that *Humanum* is increasing the exposure of HD knowledge generated by the regional programme as well as promoting debate. Average monthly visits to the website have doubled since 2011 and social network followers grow at an average monthly rate of 8 percent. However, exposure is not evenly spread across the region: there is a high concentration of users in Chile, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela.⁷⁵ A user survey conducted in 2010 revealed that the main journal users were universities or technical schools (29 percent), NGOs (24 percent) and government bodies (23 percent). Cybermetric analysis also revealed that the journal is not yet influential among regional programme knowledge platforms (*Humanum* does not receive many links from others), but it is the platform in the system that gives the highest amount of links to other programme websites. This indicates its growing role as a disseminator of knowledge.

The contribution of *Humanum* to this outcome will probably continue to increase. The journal has started a process of alliances with regional actors such as the *América Economía Journal* (*Revista América Economía*), which republishes *Humanum* articles on a regular basis⁷⁶; and the poverty practice area intends to consolidate the journal as a regional forum for non-expert dialogue on human development affairs and for dissemination of expert knowledge and analysis on the most relevant issues for the promotion of human development in the region.

The journal does not have influence in the English-speaking Caribbean, as it is only accessible in Spanish due to budgetary constraints.⁷⁷ This is a missed opportunity in terms of effectiveness given that there is demand from the subregion for best practices on social policy in other countries and cutting-edge approaches in social protection, topics that are extensively covered by the journal.

The poverty practice area took a first important step during the period on the move away from management of regional projects to a new agenda more focused on the generation of knowledge that could be used for policy advocacy and advice by country offices. A significant part of the practice area's portfolio during the period evaluated has been related to the generation of a wide range of knowledge products (working papers, books, regional HDRs).⁷⁸ This knowledge base has strategically positioned UNDP during the period, in a context characterized by the nonexistence of high-quality academic research on crucial topics such as poverty and inequality reduction.⁷⁹ There is strong evidence that this research contributed to increased knowledge and

⁷⁵ The same countries have the highest number of followers on Facebook, the highest number of users in the user survey 2010, and the highest number of visits according to Google Statistics.

⁷⁶ A specialized leading journal in the region founded 26 years ago and read by policy makers, academics, government and private-sector people. It has re-published 20 *Humanum* articles over the last four months.

⁷⁷ Research publications are an exception as they are often available in English as well.

⁷⁸ All these products are available in 'Documentos de Trabajo' in <<http://www.revistahumanum.org/>>; and in <http://economiccluster-lac.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=9&lang=en>.

⁷⁹ This interface move from regional public research to tools for policy action did not happen during the period.

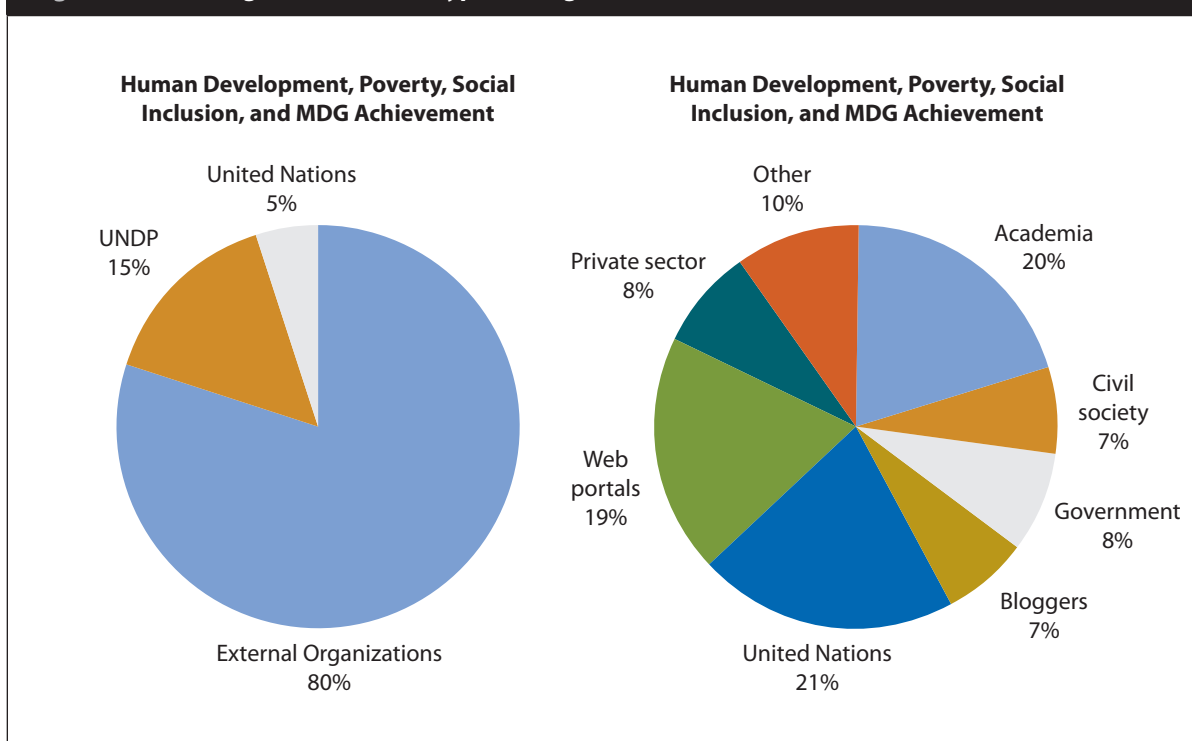
regional debate on HD-related dimensions such as poverty, inequality, MDGs, fiscal inclusiveness and sustainability, among others. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of organizations making reference to knowledge from the poverty practice area are external to the UN system (79 percent), indicating that the contribution to increased knowledge transcends the organization's internal institutional framework. Data also reveal that academia is the largest group outside the UN system (20 percent of total, and 25 percent of the external organizations).

The book *Declining Inequality in Latin America: A Decade of Progress?*⁸⁰ and its related working papers, and RHDR 2010 on breaking the

intergenerational transmission of inequality in LAC, were not only crucial in positioning the debate in the region but shifted a poverty-centred debate to one centred on inequality. This contributed to the strategic positioning of UNDP.

Of the 37 knowledge products analysed in the evaluation, *Declining Inequality* is the one with the largest number of website references, 100 percent of which came from organizations outside UN. This research had a pioneering role in explaining the causes of reductions in inequality in the region⁸¹, and its influence in inequality debates has transcended the regional framework: it has generated the interest of leading Asian institutions such as the China Development Research

Figure 2. Knowledge Products and Types of Organizations



Source: RSC 2012

⁸⁰ An output of the project Market, the State and the Dynamics of Inequality.

⁸¹ This is recognized even nowadays in the international debate. When the *Economist* writes: "According to Nora Lustig, an economist at the University of Tulane and one of the first to document the narrowing of the region's income gaps, two things have made a big difference (...)" it refers to research funded by the regional programme <<http://www.economist.com/node/21564411>>

Foundation and the Asian Development Bank in a context of rising inequality in Asia⁸².

The RHDR on inequality (2010)⁸³ was the first effort of its kind in the region to measure the incidence of inequality in human development and presented new methodological approaches and concepts that continue to be used and referred⁸⁴. Its high visibility and recognition by international media put the topic at the centre of debate⁸⁵: the Spanish newspaper *El País* published special number featuring articles from current and previous presidents of State and highly reputable intellectuals⁸⁶; and in the inauguration of the Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, the president of the Colombian Congress began his speech quoting inequality data from the report⁸⁷. Moreover, the country office in Costa Rica prepared an offprint (*Separata del IRDH 2010*) featuring an analysis of the inequality in the country that was used to positioning the debate in the country.⁸⁸

The regional programme with the support of the Spanish-UNDP Trust Fund organized three Forums for Social Strategic Thinking in Latin America. These forums enabled a regional debate at the highest level by bringing together ministers, high-level government officials, academics and development practitioners to discuss current social issues as well as social policies.

In terms of gender inequality, the regional programme (the gender practice area in close collaboration with the knowledge management practice area) linked the creation of knowledge

and the use/application of such knowledge to *increases in national capacities to integrate policies to reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion*. Achievements are mostly related to the Gender Seal, a voluntary certification process (ISO standards) for the private sector and public enterprises, which verifies that a company is meeting standards that promote workplace equality for women and men. The Gender Seal has gained widespread recognition inside and outside of UNDP and it is producing a number of tangible results across the region in relation to strengthening the capacity of private and public institutions to address inequalities in the workplace. The Gender Seal programme is active in a significant number of countries in the region, which have been building their programmes through South-South learning and have disseminated lessons emanating from their experiences in close cooperation with the regional programme.

Brazil certified 49 public and private companies. Uruguay (the pioneer) initiated the Gender Seal programme in 2007 with a main focus on co-responsibility between men and women, between companies and workers and between the State and the families. Mexico adhered to CoP of the seal with an earlier programme functioning since 2002 and with 1,200 companies certified. Chile has certified 37 companies. In Honduras, which followed the Mexican model, five companies have been certified and the Ministry of Labour integrated the seal in the management of the programmes to encourage a strong governmental institutionalization – a noteworthy achievement from a sustainability standpoint.

⁸² <<http://www.noralustig.org/conferences/>>

⁸³ Informe Regional sobre Desarrollo Humano para América Latina y el Caribe 2010. Actuar sobre el futuro: romper la transmisión intergeneracional de la desigualdad.

⁸⁴ The NHDR 2011/2012 in Guatemala, launched at the time of writing, used the conceptual framework of the regional report quite often (see pp. 30, 33, 45 and 48 of the Guatemalan NHDR).

⁸⁵ <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4tdiss8tBw>> For example, *El País* articles on presidents of State and highly reputable intellectuals; the inauguration of the Colombian President began with a speech quoting inequality data from the report; Costa Rica country office prepared a document (*Separata del IRDH 2010*) of analysis of inequality in the country used to position the debate in the country. <http://www.pnud.or.cr/images/stories/LC-_desigualdadcostarica.pdf>

⁸⁶ <<http://www.elpais.com/especial/informe-desarrollo-humano/>>.

⁸⁷ <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4tdiss8tBw>>.

⁸⁸ <http://www.pnud.or.cr/images/stories/LC-_desigualdadcostarica.pdf>.

Colombia will join in 2013 focusing on gender violence in the workplace and salary imbalances between men and women. It is interesting to note that Colombia has received technical assistance from Chile. In Nicaragua, the programme is piloting with five companies. The process stemmed from a consultation process with UNDP and UN Women.

The Gender Seal is also a best practice recognized by senior UNDP officials that has inspired a corporate certification process to recognize good performance of UNDP offices/units on gender mainstreaming.

There have been some contributions of the poverty practice area portfolio in terms of contributions to *increased capacity to implement social and economic policy to reduce poverty* but they are mostly linked to the MAF processes⁸⁹ described in outcome 28. Some other minor contributions are that, reportedly, the Mexico country office used a line of research about extreme climatic events and poverty in the dialogue with the Ministries of Social Development and the Environment⁹⁰ and more recently, the fact that the Dominican Republic country office and the Ministry of Finance have started preliminary work to use the *micro-simulation models for fiscal inclusive development* framework developed by the programme as an input to the fiscal reform dialogue process⁹¹. However, this is an expected positive side effect, given that none of the five countries for which the simulation models were intended have shown interest in using them.⁹²

With the exception of these modest contributions, the majority of the high-quality cutting-edge research generated by the regional programme was highly underutilized, especially by country offices, which were supposed to use the research to strengthen their policy advice and technical assistance to national governments. This raises questions on the value for money of these initiatives, as there is no clear evidence of links between the knowledge generated and public policy action, which was the intended objective.⁹³

The evaluation explored reasons why high-quality research linked to a relevant analytical agenda did not translate into policy advice and advocacy, and several issues were identified: the analytical research base generated by the programme was not translated into practical tools, instruments or mechanisms that could be easily and readily used for country offices in assisting partner governments with improving particular policy aspects or solving problems; dissemination strategies were not clear from the outset; there were no clear roadmaps for action specifying how and when to use the research; and knowledge products were designed and conceived at headquarters, often not involving the country offices. This resulted in lack of buy-in to the research products, which were seen as academic rather than as tools for advocacy and advice in ongoing policy processes. Furthermore, the practice area ran without a chief economist for 18 months, and the momentum gained by some of the research initiatives was lost. The poverty practice area is currently working on the development of a fully

⁸⁹ In Colombia, and in the national level MAFs in Belize and Costa Rica.

⁹⁰ <<http://www.revistahumanum.org/revista/documentos-pagina-2/>>.

⁹¹ The simulation will offer the possibility of comparing how proposed reform measures affect lower-income groups (the effects of the reform on the poor/how progressive is the reform).

⁹² The simulation models are the main output of the Fiscal Schemes for Inclusive Development initiative.

⁹³ The evaluation did not find any evidence after 60 interviews and having consulted the resources listed in Annex 2. This does not mean there is no evidence, but if it exists: it is not easily found (which is disproportionate in comparison to the portfolio investment); and it did not happen through country office.

fledged agenda to overcome the aforementioned factors (see sustainability section). In 2012, the poverty practice area has begun to target 12 country offices to fill this gap with a new poverty toolkit and a set of targeted products – no results have been generated yet.

It can be concluded that the poverty portfolio has made effective contributions to knowledge generation and debate on human development, but has not been as effective in increasing capacities for policy action⁹⁴ (except for gender). The report concludes that, on the whole, UNDP performed less well than expected in providing support to its national partners to extract and utilize knowledge and learning from its interventions at project and policy levels.⁹⁵

EFFICIENCY

The cost-efficiency of some of the research products is questionable, as they have not been used to equip country offices to provide improved policy advocacy, advice and technical support to country programmes, the core of the UNDP's business model.⁹⁶ The overall cost-efficiency of this outcome is also open to question⁹⁷ when one compares the USD 10.98 million spent over the period and the mixed results obtained: outstanding contributions in terms of knowledge and regional debate but scant contributions in terms of policy impact. A noteworthy exception would be the Gender Seal programme that achieved considerable results, as discussed above, with a financial investment of around USD 100,000 from 2009 to 2012.

There were some efficiency setbacks, such as the severe delays experienced by the Fiscal Schemes for Inclusive Development (FSID) project. Such

stumbling blocks resulted in a 9-month delay between completion and launch of the book on micro-simulation models for Latin America. As a consequence, the national dissemination of the models did not take place and the project is closed. Planned national workshops in country offices and the inclusion of the simulation models as a component of a recently developed fiscal toolkit⁹⁸ offer good prospects to reverse the lack of use of the micro-simulation models. The HD network has proven a solid asset and has generated efficiencies for the HRD Office. The network has been active in relevant discussions through its focal points and has provided substantial and efficient contributions on topics such as multidimensional poverty and HD metrics.

SUSTAINABILITY

Most of the contributions to this outcome are at an intermediate stage and will need further support in order to consolidate sustainable contributions to development in the region. There are good prospects in this regard, as the new strategy of the poverty practice area builds to a great extent on the work done during the period analysed, offering the possibility to capitalize on the knowledge products of the period. The new strategy allows for several of the investments made during the 2008-2011 period to materialize, enabling the practice area to advance in the public policy research agenda while drawing upon the research legacy on inequality.

The current portfolio has three main pillars: the so-called fiscal toolkit, the missing dimensions initiative and research on middle-income traps in Latin America. A strong aspect of the fiscal toolkit in terms of sustainability is that, among its five components, it includes the micro-simulation

⁹⁴ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Poverty Reduction', New York, 2013, also supports the finding.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See paragraph 28 (d) of the UNDP Strategic Plan.

⁹⁷ The regional programme does not include cost-efficiency indicators and targets, which prevents an objective assessment in this regard.

⁹⁸ The Toolkit PNUD-CEQ (Commitment to Equity) is a joint initiative between the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and the project Commitment to Equity of the University of Tulane.

models of the aforementioned FSID project.⁹⁹ In addition, the toolkit builds upon the research papers and knowledge products produced during the period of the evaluation on inclusive development and inequality.

Some features of the toolkit suggest that it will be able to overcome several of the factors that have limited the impact of previous knowledge products. It is less an abstract knowledge product and more a practical application of public policy analytical instruments in response to demands from country offices and national counterparts. It also moves away from atomized external consultancies into an approach based on structured consultancies (accompaniment) for policy advice and advocacy on issues related to social protection, conditional cash transfers and labour markets.

This strategy is particularly conducive to sustainability in a more restrictive funding context. Funds from the Spain-UNDP Trust Fund had allowed the generation of a substantial part of the knowledge and debate on human development during the evaluated period, but will not be available in the next period. The Missing Dimensions Project, at design phase at the time of writing, also provides the opportunity to reposition the poverty practice area to provide substantial contributions to the current human development conceptual framework. The initiative brings all the previous work done on the metrics of well-being one step forward, and could develop into a Latin American barometer, which would promote opportunities for incentive-based inter-practice area collaboration.¹⁰⁰

The Virtual School has recently started implementing a *package approach* that presents very good prospects for sustainability of the knowledge transferred. The spirit of the approach is to integrate the courses in the recipient organizations so that they may be replicated and expanded. The package features training of trainers, and transfer of toolkits, guides and course materials to the recipient institutions. The first pilot, the course on 'local governance and public management with a human development approach' for the Ministry of Health in Guatemala is being transferred at the moment and prospects for replication are high. On the other hand, the drastic reduction of funds from the Spanish Cooperation, one of the main supporters of the school, is opening the floor for in-depth reflections on the business model to be followed by the school in order to start the process towards self-sustainability.

Strengthened institutional capacity to develop innovative initiatives for regional cooperation of knowledge. (Outcome 30)

RELEVANCE

This crosscutting outcome¹⁰¹ is fully aligned with the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and with the Knowledge Management Strategy 2009-2011, which identifies "effective knowledge management as a part of the improved business model" as one of the core corporate mandates for UNDP's knowledge strategy¹⁰².

The reformulation of this outcome subsequent to the mid-term evaluation to "Development effectiveness, impact and innovation of policy

⁹⁹ The toolkit has been presented in some countries where, reportedly, it has already spurred strong interest.

¹⁰⁰ This will build upon previous surveys of well-being conducted by Gallup, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the *Latinobarometro* and the Latin American Public Opinion Survey, and will add a dimension of comparability by collecting new data in standardized and recurrent fashion.

¹⁰¹ It is not particularly associated with any of the focus and practice areas but to all of them simultaneously given that the generation and use of knowledge is considered a corporate feature and one of the UNDP's main comparative advantages (See section 28 (e) of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013).

¹⁰² See section 'current mandate for a new knowledge strategy' in UNDP Knowledge Strategy 2009-2011: Enabling UNDP to share and leverage its knowledge and experience, Bureau for Development Policy, KM Group.

work and technical assistance in countries is increased” does not reflect the breadth of the expected effects. This formulation is less specific than the original one, and targets and indicators are activity-oriented (*implementing* actions that *support* results) rather than outcomes-oriented, and, as a consequence, do not reflect how far the programme intended to go in terms of the chain of effects described in the knowledge management definition: “knowledge management is defined as the set of strategies, processes and actions that facilitate the greater use of tangible and intangible knowledge to act more effectively and achieve a greater impact”¹⁰³.

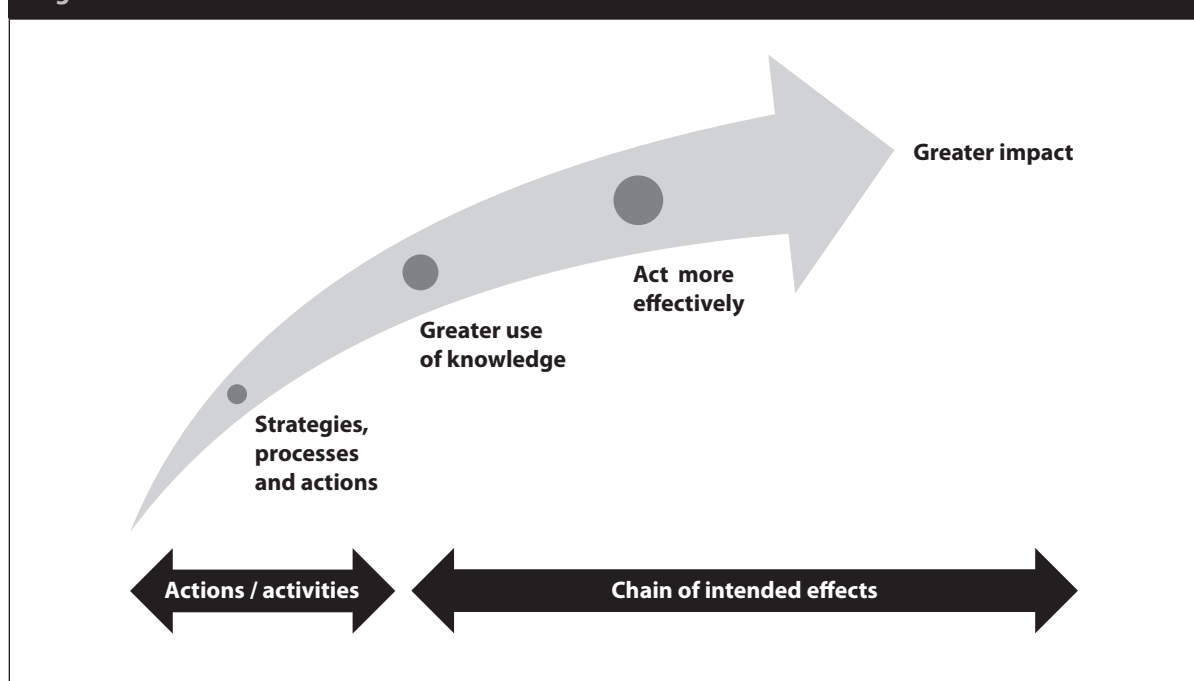
Three portfolios of the regional programme have particularly contributed to this outcome due to their focus on knowledge generation, transfer and sharing: the Knowledge Management Unit (KMU), the Virtual School, and the regional project America Latina GENERA¹⁰⁴, which does

not report formally to this outcome, even when it is one of the most relevant platforms generating and using knowledge within the regional programme. The fact that these portfolios are demand-driven has enabled them to ensure to a great extent the responsiveness and adaptability of their actions to the evolving knowledge generation and sharing needs in the region.

EFFECTIVENESS

Effective contributions have been made towards this outcome. A number of countries have implemented knowledge-management approaches to support development effectiveness, South-South cooperation and policy work. During 2010 and 2011, 12 interventions were jointly implemented by KMU with country offices. Subsequent to the RCF 2002-2006 evaluation, the regional programme integrated knowledge management as an axis of service provision across the board. Some

Figure 3. Chain of Intended Effects



¹⁰³ KMU definition: <<http://www.regionalcentre-lac-undp.org/JML/en/knowledge-management>>.

¹⁰⁴ GENERA is one of the most relevant platforms generating and using knowledge within the regional programme but it does not report formally to this outcome.

practice areas have made progress in effectively integrating knowledge management¹⁰⁵ and knowledge platforms as currently quite interlinked, as evidenced by the network relations between LAC UNDP knowledge platforms depicted in Annex 5 (Figures 1 and 2, Cybermetric Analysis of UNDP Knowledge Products and Platforms, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation-admin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>).

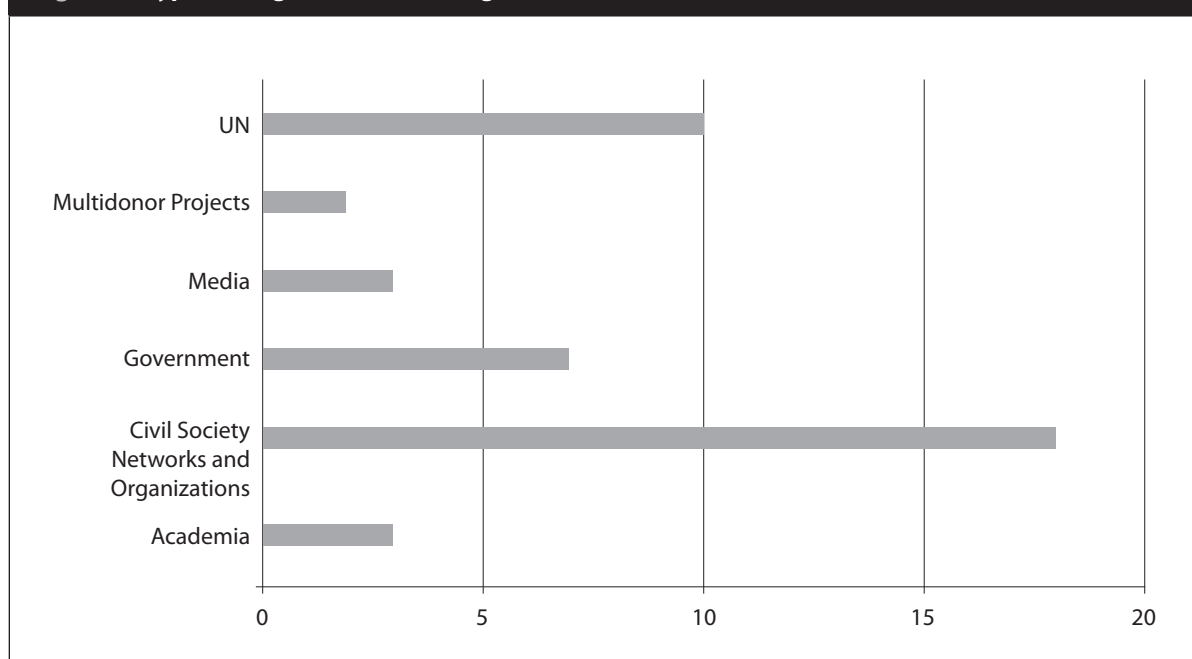
Contributions to this outcome depend on the focus area or unit involved, and on the level of effects of the definition of knowledge management. Programme contributions in terms of use of knowledge for action and impact are quite prominent in the gender, CPR and disaster risk mitigation areas, but less evident in the poverty and democratic governance areas.

Particular attention is due to America Latina GENERA: an innovative initiative for regional cooperation in the generation and use of knowledge on gender. America Latina GENERA is

a project that includes the portal but is not limited to it. This flagship of the gender practice area is a high-quality thematic platform and has contributed significantly to: the dissemination, organization, and systematization of information and knowledge; the generation of networks and communities of practice; and the development of synergies among stakeholders on relevant gender issues. The platform has become a top-class reference point and broker for knowledge on gender in the Spanish-speaking region, with almost three times more external links to the site than the equivalent 'Observatorio de Igualdad de CEPAL'. However, there is room for greater dissemination of products within GENERA to interested audiences.

America Latina GENERA is the backbone of the partnership strategy of the gender practice area and has contributed to fostering solid partnerships with stakeholders inside the UN (country offices and UN agencies) and outside, including regional and national governments, and (as can be seen in Figure 4) civil society networks

Figure 4. Types of Organizations Linking to GENERA



¹⁰⁵ For example, HIV/AIDS team incorporated a knowledge management consultant.

within the region. The site has also contributed to the generation of debate, positioning gender issues on key governmental and non-governmental agendas nationally and regionally. It has also effectively contributed to knowledge management through the dissemination of: evidence (such as the paper 'Why Time Deficit Matters'), policy research (such as 'Work and Family') and support to knowledge fairs and products for campaigns such as Rio+20, UNITE, etc. The site is also credited with contributing to internal and external capacities at national and regional levels by producing and making available to country offices and other stakeholders, online courses like 'Gender and Social Protection' and 'Risk Management for Human Development School'.

The evaluation of the RCF 2002-2006 pointed out that the programme had contributed to the generation of knowledge in the areas under evaluation but that it was less clear how significant the contributions had been in translating such knowledge into development policies.¹⁰⁶ Whereas in the current programme there are examples of the same phenomena recurring (as seen under outcome 29), there are also cases where knowledge products have led to influencing policies. One of the most prominent cases is the report 'Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-responsibility'. The report ranks second in terms of estimated links and reposts after 'Declining Inequality in Latin America: A Decade of Progress'. Significantly, it is also the most referenced publication in Spanish, with over 42 percent more estimated links than the second '*Informe sobre desarrollo humano para Mercosur: Innovar para incluir, jóvenes y desarrollo humano*'. The factors behind the success of 'Work and Family' in terms of use and impact are:

- A strong partnership with International Labour Organization (ILO) in the region: ILO and UNDP shared the activities related to the report both financially and strategically

from the beginning stages of designing and implementing the project until the final dissemination and the advocacy plan. This partnership contributed to expanding the outreach of the product.

- A thorough consultation process with country offices and other stakeholders: During 2008 and early 2009 a number of consultation workshops and meetings were held by both partners (UNDP and ILO) in Central America, Andean Region, South Cone and the Caribbean, ensuring the relevance of the report and promoting early national ownership.
- A number of related publications financed and coordinated by UNDP in the region were used as inputs for the report: This placed 'Work and Family' within a regional process, building on work done by country offices, as opposed to presenting the report as a 'one-off top-down' knowledge product. The use of these inputs capitalized on previous partners, knowledge and audiences.
- An extensive dissemination strategy: a) The report was launched internationally and regionally at very high-level events in Geneva and Chile.¹⁰⁷ It was followed by launches in 10 countries and served as key document for national debates on the financial crisis organized by UNDP, ILO and UN Women (then UNIFEM) in six Central American countries. b) GENERA habilitated a permanent space within the platform to publicize the report. c) The report had an initial circulation of 3,500 copies and was re-edited in partnerships with governmental institutions in Brazil and Mexico.
- Production of sub-products: Following an increasing interest by the countries three national studies have been produced in Costa Rica, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic to continue supporting national dialogues on the subject and eventually

¹⁰⁶ See page 29: UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP's Second Regional Cooperation Framework of Latin America and the Caribbean 2002-2006', New York, 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Geneva, June 2009 at the International Labour Conference on Gender; and Chile, June 2009, hosted by President Bachelet.

aiding the implementation of specific public policies. Additionally a number of related products have been developed, such as training courses on 'Gender and Macroeconomics' and 'Gender and Social Protection Policies'.

- The role of the Knowledge Management Unit is to enhance the effectiveness of knowledge products, providing advisory services to help country offices with communication and dissemination strategies, tools and methods. A recurrent issue has been the lack of dissemination or advocacy strategies for the various knowledge products. Some of these products have generated positive unintended effects¹⁰⁸, but some respond to a *just in case* rather than to a *just in time* logic (for action)¹⁰⁹. KMU has supported the region, for example, through the Sharing Knowledge Series (*Serie Compartir Conocimiento*).

This Sharing Knowledge Series initiative has succeeded in bringing the region one step forward in terms of systematizing experiences and making them available for others. What it is not clear is the extent to which knowledge products that embed the systematized experiences are used in practice as inputs in subsequent initiatives. The regional programme does not monitor whether this happens and sample data collected in the evaluation shows anecdotal evidence in both directions.

The Virtual School has directly contributed to this outcome spreading practical knowledge and experiences across the region by means of adapting existing courses for other countries. This process has led to a regionalization of experiences conducive to the development of regional cooperation, integration and use of knowledge sought by this outcome 30. A clear example in this regard was the course on local governance

and decentralization processes for Colombia, El Salvador and Dominican Republic in the framework of the PROLOGO regional project. This course was later adapted and incorporated into courses for local governance and public management in the health sector in Guatemala, local leadership for indigenous women in Mexico, and local governance and participation in electoral processes in the GPECS-ALC regional project. Moreover, the transformation and evolution process experienced by the school over the analysed period is in itself an example of an *innovative initiative (...) for the generation and use of knowledge* across the region.

EFFICIENCY

There has been improvement in strengthening the management of networks and tools to channel knowledge but the actual management and use of knowledge has not yet been optimized. The added value and cost-efficiency of some tools and platforms are still questionable. There has been a visible increase in the number of available tools and platforms enabling knowledge sharing, e.g. newsletters, Illuminate, CoPs and Teamworks. The most recent innovation during the period was the launch in 2009 of Teamworks, a technical platform proposed by UNDP to implement the Knowledge Management Strategy and foster knowledge sharing. The Knowledge Management Global Strategy 2009-2011 points out that "the challenge facing UNDP is to make its experience readily available to ensure effective operation and foster additional business opportunities". In this context, Teamworks "strives to foster a rich collaborative environment to deliver the most relevant knowledge where it is most urgently needed". Despite all this effort, country offices still perceive knowledge is dispersed rather than readily available.

¹⁰⁸ The production of the Belize case study on national coordination of AIDS responses in 2011, for example, led to strengthening of relationships and broadening of the network of the National AIDS Commission and opening of new institutional communication lines that strengthened the national response.

¹⁰⁹ 'Just in case' designates the production of knowledge management (KM) products just so that they might be used/useful at some point in the future before its shelf life expires. 'Just in time' approach designates that the KM product is a part of a process and responds to a demand for a specific use.

Teamworks' usage is not widespread, and when used, it is not considered an efficient tool to find information and to share knowledge. Interviews in country offices confirmed the results of an EO survey which showed that: 58 percent of country offices find Teamworks an important resource to find information yet 53 percent disagree that Teamworks offers a significant improvement in knowledge management by UNDP; 70 percent reported that staff do not often use Teamworks; 82.4 percent have not been successful in finding useful information on Teamworks; and 87.5 percent do not use Teamworks to share their own experience and knowledge. Cybermetric analysis points to similar findings, revealing that the majority of visits to Teamworks come from headquarters in the United States, rather than country offices in the region. Possible explanations for the lack of use that emerged from the data collected are insufficient orientation and training in the use of the platform, suggesting that the problem may not be the platform itself but the promotion of its use in country offices. This may indicate the need for a communication strategy to generate incentives for use. Several CoPs have created user spaces in Teamworks. Although the use of these spaces varies depending on the topic (see Annex 5 on Cybermetric analysis online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>), sample interviews revealed that CoP annual meetings were more valued than interaction through the platform.

Attention can be called to efficient results of GENERA (the third most referenced platform ascribed to the regional programme, only surpassed by the Virtual School and the RSC site) achieved with a total budget of USD 1,725,044 for the period 2009-2011 of which an estimated 66 percent was dedicated to paying salaries of core personnel in the gender practice area. The project is also credited with 'incubating' new initiatives that eventually became independent projects in their own right such as the Gender

Seal, which became a project outside GENERA in 2012. Therefore, much less was spent on the web portal itself.

The remaining cost-efficiency challenge is the weak link between the generation and use of knowledge. What is more, despite a considerable number of tools and sources, individual users are often still finding it difficult to access the information they require. A recurrent theme in interviews for this evaluation was the need for a database of regional experiences with the possibility to search experiences by topic, and providing contact details for relevant people so that effective transfer of experience can take place.

SUSTAINABILITY

The adaptability of knowledge products to country contexts is highly valued by country offices, and determines their sustainability to a great extent. The Virtual School adaptations are considered good practice because they ensure relevance of the knowledge and more sustainable use, as the knowledge can continue to be applied. Moreover, the methodologies and learning products associated with the Virtual School allow the knowledge generated at the regional level and within the courses to be scaled up.

A sustainability concern is that the regional programme does not include knowledge management programming, which would be an implicit exit strategy. Knowledge management considerations are not incorporated in the design of all interventions from the onset. KMU is offering ad hoc ex-post services that may partially reverse this, but the root problem remains.

3.2 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Dialogue and participation, especially of women and children, youth, people with disabilities, people of African descent and indigenous groups fostered. (Outcome 31)

RELEVANCE

This outcome is aligned with UNDP's mandate, the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and the main UNDP governance development priorities¹¹⁰. Activities described below aim to contribute to strengthening democratic governance at the regional and subregional (impacting at national and/or subnational) level and fostering inclusive participation. The programme has prioritized fostering social inclusion through focus on building capacities of vulnerable groups (Afro-descendants, youth and indigenous people) for political participation and enhancing participation of women in democracies throughout the region. The regional programme has contributed to policy dialogue and programme support in democratic governance from its assistance to countries traversing critical junctures or changes of administration (El Salvador, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru) through initiatives such as the Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP) and Dialogue and Social Cohesion to support the Economic and Social Councils.

The reformulated outcome "Dialogue on democracy and citizen participation on public policies promoted at the national and subnational levels especially of discriminated and excluded groups" after MTE in 2011, is further aligned with the HIV/AIDS priorities for development. The original RPD results framework did not include any mention to HIV/AIDS in the formulation of the outcome and indicators. This was partially resolved with the creation of the HIV/AIDS team at RSC in 2009 and with the revision of the results framework subsequent to MTE in early 2011. The new outcome reflected an important element of the regional strategy followed by the HIV/AIDS area¹¹¹: the fact that HIV incidence and prevalence¹¹² and the number of people who

have died of AIDS in the region are highly correlated with the stigma and discrimination suffered by gay men, other men who have sex with men and transgender people. One of the shadow outcome indicators refers to national policies on AIDS involving participation of CSOs including people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA).

Programme interventions contributing to the achievement of this outcome were relevant. The HIV/AIDS expertise available at RSC has become a relevant added value to the region in a scenario where country offices in the region did not have the expertise and technical skills to effectively support transgender communities.

EFFECTIVENESS

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE – OUTCOME-LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions towards fostering inclusive participation for democratic development are evaluated as relatively effective considering the small amount of resources. The focus of the contributions has been on opening spaces for dialogue between government and civil society, and building capacities of specific groups of constituents: indigenous peoples, people of African descent, youth, and women in specific countries. The regional programme contributed to regional debates on democracy and to creating spaces and dialogue between government and civil society, national or social actors, in specific countries; to enhancing the participation of women in LAC democracies; to enhanced discussion of issues related to the inclusion of minority groups; and to raising awareness and building capacities of specific groups to participate in dialogue.

PAPEP has been particularly valuable and powerful to enhance the position of UNDP

¹¹⁰ The Democratic Governance Unit has made a concerted effort to commission independent evaluations for the most relevant projects PROLOGO, AFROS, PAPEP, that helped to systematize the very solid approaches used in these projects.

¹¹¹ The Latin American and Caribbean Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Responses to HIV for Gay Men, Other MSM and Transgender People, September 2010.

¹¹² HIV prevalence indicates the number of people living with HIV, and HIV incidence indicates the number of new infections.

in certain countries. PAPEP made important contributions through timely and effective reports¹¹³ prepared at the request of the country offices or governments in critical situations. PAPEP reports have been used in many countries to foster dialogue, build consensus and assist decision-making by providing policy advice on strategic issues in national development. In Bolivia, PAPEP's contributions to the national dialogue and the National Electoral Court were considered essential to overcome challenges to democratic governance in 2008-2009. In Peru, during the 2011-2012 presidential campaign and presidential transition, a PAPEP report was presented to President Ollanta Humala, the cabinet, legislature, political actors and experts, fostering constructive and inclusive dialogue in relation to the new government. In El Salvador, PAPEP's work helped to identify risks to the 2009 electoral processes, and also helped to guide the country office's work.

Other important interventions contributed to democratic governance by moving forward the political debate and generating regional discussions about democracy. Reports on democracy such as the 'Second Regional Democracy Report: *Nuestra democracia*' (Our Democracia) (2010) and 'The State of Citizenship: Transformations, Achievements and Challenges for the State in Latin America in the 21st Century' (2011)¹¹⁴ were prepared through a region-wide consultation process and constitute strategic instruments for UNDP cooperation on advocacy, policy dialogue and programme assistance in this sector. These reports placed UNDP at the centre of contemporary policy debates and provided governments with frameworks to assess their own

progress against that of their Latin American counterparts.

In terms of democratic governance, another effective contribution towards supporting dialogue between government and civil society, in the context of polarization, was the Dialogue and Social Cohesion project in El Salvador¹¹⁵. The regional programme has been providing support and high-level ongoing technical assistance to the national Economic and Social Council (*Consejo Económico Social - CES*) since 2009. UNDP El Salvador served as the CES executive secretariat and this was considered key to the success of the initiative, due to UNDP's position as a neutral mediator. Policy dialogue and consensus building among entrepreneurs, civil society and unions continues on issues such as public-private partnerships. A recently approved development bank by-law is an example of dialogue, as it contained elements of the discussions at CES.¹¹⁶

Important contributions towards fostering dialogue and the participation of women in democracies were also made through regional programme support to women parliamentarians. Regional meetings of women parliamentarians took place every year, followed up with regional programme support for ongoing action by women legislators in these countries. This has resulted in important achievements in Mexico, El Salvador, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica, related to equity-based governmental practices and the incorporation of gender equality in parliament business. For example:

- In El Salvador, the support provided contributed to the institutionalization of a gender

¹¹³ These include: prospective political analysis reports, institutional road maps, public policies and development project assessments and political situations analysis - short and medium term.

¹¹⁴ Currently a third report is being produced on 'Political Rights of Citizens'. These are part of the project Regional Reports on Democracy and Citizenship (*Informes Regionales de Democracia*).

¹¹⁵ The project also had reported activities in the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Paraguay.

¹¹⁶ In addition to this, the regional programme provided strategic advice to the design of capacity development for CES members and assistance to the country office for additional resources through the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund. This work resulted in the building of capacities and the gaining of valuable experiences by stakeholders involved in the process of establishing CES, particularly in terms of building trusting relationships and working in a polarized environment.

unit in parliament, to develop tools to ensure gender focus and prevent gender discrimination by the parliament. In addition, the process contributed to new legislation on violence against women.

- In Paraguay, a secretary of gender of the judiciary was established in order to effectively comply with international treaties on women's rights ratified by the Paraguayan Government. In addition, the Tribunal for Electoral Justice signed a formal agreement with the secretary of women in order to mainstream gender within public policies.
- In Chile, a national campaign supported by RSC through the CSO Comunidad Mujer and the country office aiming to influence policy makers and political parties to promote greater involvement of women has produced timid results. In the municipal elections of 2012, the number of women elected to positions of mayor and town councillor increased (if slightly).
- In Costa Rica, an integral policy of equity and equality is being drafted in order to mainstream gender within the legislative assembly. This initiative is being financed directly by the regional centre, as a pilot with the potential of replication in other legislative units in the region.

Other activities contributed to fostering dialogue about the participation of vulnerable groups, raising awareness and increasing capacities for political participation at the individual level for people of African descent, young and indigenous peoples.

Networking opportunities and key advocacy documents were produced with the intention of also building capacity through the through specific workshops and courses of the Virtual School.

More time and resources would be necessary to ensure that over the longer term, these will contribute to a critical mass of leadership, and increase the participation of these groups in policy-making and electoral processes. However, it was not possible to determine the reach and depth of these activities regarding contributions to regional development.

In the case of people of African descent, the regional programme supported a series of studies to raise public awareness of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and increase their visibility, and contribute to develop their capacity, organizations and networks. A particular effort was made to support a regional summit on the topic in line with the General Assembly resolution declaring 2011 the International Year of People of African Descent.¹¹⁷ The regional programme built capacities of leaders of people of African descent from Colombia, Ecuador and Panama. On the issue of youth participation, regional meetings had the participation of 767 people from youth networking, 50 people from the youth community of practice, 51 people from social audits workshops, 75 people from the political communication virtual courses from 16 countries¹¹⁸. In the case of indigenous peoples, in 2011-2012 individuals from six countries¹¹⁹ were involved in an initiative jointly implemented by RBLAC and BDP's Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support in Latin America (GPECS). The regional programme produced a set of actions to develop the capacities of women and young indigenous actors and networks on political and electoral participation; facilitate partnerships between electoral authorities and indigenous organizations; support the regional caucus of the UN Forum on Indigenous Peoples; and develop and disseminate knowledge products such as the *Actores Comprometidos con el Apoyo a la Participación Política y Electoral de*

¹¹⁷ The regional summit took place in Salvador, Brazil and had the participation of about 2,000 leaders and heads of state from Latin America, the Caribbean and African states.

¹¹⁸ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

¹¹⁹ Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

*Mujeres y Jóvenes Indígenas en México, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, y Bolivia*¹²⁰.

The services provided by the regional programme in democratic governance were of satisfactory quality and knowledge products produced were relevant to engage governments and stakeholders in collaborative efforts. The evaluation also found that, in the governance sector, the regional programme provided efficient and timely services of satisfactory quality, in respect to the country office needs.

In places where interventions were coordinated with other country office or regional programme activities, there were opportunities to further apply capacities developed and cooperate with different practice areas, countries, local institutions and stakeholders. Leaders of African descent receiving capacity development activities from the above-mentioned regional programme project have become key political actors and actively participate in community councils that were supported by the Proposals for Local Governance (PROLOGO) project.

PROLOGO was a regional pilot project (2008-2010) funded by the Generalitat Valenciana, and implemented by three country offices (El Salvador, Colombia and the Dominican Republic) with technical support from RSC. PROLOGO was an initiative that promoted local democratic governance in the context of human development through inclusive participation and the strengthening local institutions. RSC established a partnership with the three country offices, and through them with local stakeholders (authorities and civil society) to create the PROLOGO Network, comprising three interrelated components: 1) three local centres to review and monitor the conditions of local administration for achieving the MDGs; 2) a regional node to provide local centres with policy advice, knowledge tools and methodologies on good local

governance; and 3) training system for local democracy – virtual and non-virtual. PROLOGO project work in coordination with country offices (Colombia, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic) complemented the ongoing work of local organizations. In Colombia, PROLOGO strengthened the advocacy capacity and alliances of Afro-Colombian community groups through work with community councils to map the groups and their activities, and support for the creation of a physical community centre in Cartagena. In El Salvador, work was coordinated with the activities of the CPR practice area, promoting the participation of the local population in municipal planning processes and discussions related to citizen security.

There have been fewer interventions in this area in the Caribbean, where initiatives have not yet produced significant contributions towards this outcome. A democratic governance agenda for English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries was discussed and agreed in 2011. Based on that agenda, new follow-up actions and products were developed in 2012: mapping and analysis of good practices on youth engagement and citizen security in the Caribbean; the preparation of a report on legal aid for women in the Caribbean, and a regional mapping on Rule of Law initiatives in the Caribbean. At a recent social audit workshop in Jamaica for Caribbean youth leaders and entrepreneurs organized by the democratic practice area, participants identified social audit targets for 2013 national proposals and strategies.

In addition, regional programme-funded activities geared support towards high-level regional and subregional coordination forums, including the Summit of the Americas, the Ibero-American Summit, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This support has underlined the work of UNDP and UN system on democratic governance, expanding advocacy actions at Head of State level and strengthening

¹²⁰ The report contains information on demographics, rights and current legislation, electoral systems in each country and lists of organizations (including indigenous ones) supporting the rights and political and electoral participation of indigenous populations.

regional and subregional coordination. Work was also done to strengthen democratic governance in CARICOM through the fielding of CARICOM electoral Observer Missions to Dominica (2009), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2010), Guyana and Saint Lucia (2011).

Enhanced coordination between the regional, global and country programmes as well as national structures, particularly country offices, continues to be necessary.¹²¹ This creates a situation in which strategies and responses to governments are not always coordinated as ‘one UNDP’. There have been issues of miscommunication and/or lack of coordination at the local level. This is especially critical in situations where resources are scarce and there is a need to create synergies and strategically coordinate interventions. Moreover, certain activities are perceived to be top-down, developed at RBLAC (New York) or directly by projects, with little coordination with the country office. There have been cases in which work was not synchronized with ongoing local activities and did not contribute to the country office work.

Even though RBLAC has made an effort to engage BDP and BCPR, as well as coordinate with DPA Americas Division, to coordinate implementation between the global and regional programmes at the country level,¹²² the criteria for determining when a regional approach or intervention is appropriate¹²³ are still not sufficiently clear to country offices and stakeholders. The evaluation noted that the selection process for thematic area interventions and/or country participation in projects has not always been transparent, and decisions have not been consistently well communicated to country offices

and stakeholders. Country offices are not always clear about why a thematic topic was chosen for a report, or why a country was chosen for a project. In certain countries, where the local country office has limited leverage, this is particularly critical as there is hesitation to engage local stakeholders and counterparts when the certainty of initiatives progressing is not clear. There have also been cases in which regional reports cover a number of countries, but because authors represent a certain subregion, the work lacked sufficiently wide consultation. This was the case of some of the reports on democracy described above.

HIV/AIDS – OUTCOME-LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS

With regard to HIV/AIDS, there is considerable evidence that this practice area has contributed substantially to the achievement of this outcome. This can be assessed in terms of the relevant indicators in the results framework, i.e. involvement of vulnerable and excluded groups in civic engagement, formulation and implementation of public agendas, participatory processes, mechanisms to increase political participation and, most importantly, national policies on AIDS response involving the participation of CSO, including people living with HIV/AIDS.

The regional programme has financially supported the process of making marginalized groups visible in the General Assemblies of OAS by supporting the participation in meetings of members of the Coalition of LGBTTTTI organizations in LAC¹²⁴ such as REDLACTRANS and the Heartland Alliance. The results of the work of the coalition over the last few years are palpable today: several resolutions on human rights, sexual

¹²¹ Recommendations of UNDP Evaluation Office, ‘Evaluation of UNDP’s Second Regional Cooperation Framework of Latin America and the Caribbean 2002–2006’, New York, 2007.

¹²² Examples of such coordination are PACDE and TRAALOG, GPECS – LAC, Global Programmes HHRR Support and work on indigenous peoples in LAC.

¹²³ Enhanced coordination between the regional programme and UNDP global and national structures, particularly the country office, was one of the recommendations of ‘Evaluation of UNDP’s Second Regional Cooperation Framework of Latin America and the Caribbean 2002–2006’.

¹²⁴ The Coalition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Travesty and Intersex (LGBTTTTI) Latin American and Caribbean organizations working in the Organization of America States (OAS).

orientation and gender identity approved by the General Assembly of OAS¹²⁵; and the establishment of the Unit for the Rights of LGBTI people of the Inter-American Commission on HHR of OAS, which is an indication of the effectiveness of the advocacy efforts of the coalition given that the establishment of the unit responds to an expansion in the number and scope of the resolutions.

The contribution of the programme to improving the participation of marginalized and traditionally excluded groups is noticeable in a context where the baseline situation at the start of the evaluated period was extremely low throughout the region. In this regard, the regional programme has played a visible role in supporting the start of a long-term process. The HIV/AIDS team has followed an integral and consistent approach to providing support in this regard by supporting organizations at a national level whereas simultaneously supporting regional networks such as REDLACTRANS. For example, REDTRANS in Nicaragua has received direct technical assistance and financial support for drafting the national Gender Identity Bill and supported with policy advocacy workshops for the Gender Identity Law in LAC, in which a number of national and regional transgender organizations participated.¹²⁶ Similarly the support provided to REDLACTRANS in the 10th round of the Global Fund¹²⁷ helped by providing evidence-based research that stigma, inequality and discrimination lead to exclusion and ultimately explain the higher chances of getting HIV-infected in the LAC region.

The provision of support for strategic regional meetings proved an effective form of support.

The meeting in Nicaragua, for example, resulted in a work plan for policy advocacy towards the adoption of a Gender Identity Law in the region, and the signing of support for the bill by national congress members (Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras and Bolivia) and legal advisers (Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua). Participation in these UNDP-supported meetings and workshops has prompted interactions that have translated into alliances among civil society actors. For example, regional dialogue in São Paulo prompted OTRANS (*Comunicado Organización Trans Reinas de la Noche*) Guatemala and the Sexual Diversity Human Rights Ombudsman of Nicaragua to start working together to establish such an institution in Guatemala. The regional programme has developed similar work with indigenous peoples as well, for example, supporting the regional caucus meetings and LAC participation in the annual UN Indigenous People's Forum at UN Headquarters, or regional/subregional forums and networks.

Support to excluded groups at times has gone beyond supporting their participation in regional forums to structural grassroots support to ensure the minimum installed capacity for these organizations to be able to participate.¹²⁸ For example, the regional programme supported an OTRANS community-strengthening project in Guatemala as a basis to establish the national network (REDTRANS Guatemala) in July 2011.

The HIV/AIDS team has played a central role in hosting and organizing regional dialogues of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law. These dialogues have resulted in direct contribution to the achievement of outcome 31 in terms of participation of excluded and marginalized

¹²⁵ <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/23310160/1566072732/name/5.+AG-RES_2721_XLII-O-12_esp.pdf>

¹²⁶ The main regional organization is REDLACTRANS; and the workshop in the example took place recently in Nicaragua.

¹²⁷ The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is an international financing organization that aims to attract and disburse additional resources to prevent and treat HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria <<http://www.theglobalfund.org>>.

¹²⁸ Support from the regional programme to the strengthening of the national response in Belize, for example, went into decentralization and capacity-building at local level.

groups and the establishment of mechanisms to increase political participation. The HIV/AIDS team hosted two Global Commission regional dialogues in the region, one in the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago) in April 2011 and the other in Latin America (São Paulo, Brazil) in June 2011. The latter already generated a series of effects in line with outcome 31: it encouraged the subsequent organization of national dialogues in some countries (Belize, Panama); it supported traditionally excluded groups and it prompted partnerships, for example, between UNDP and United Belize Advocacy Movement to submit an HIV/AIDS Thematic Trust Fund proposal and the establishment of the network for PLWHA and sex workers in the country. Country delegations took responsibility for making the recommendations of the São Paulo regional dialogue.

The effects of the regional dialogue in the Caribbean are less noticeable than in Latin America. Chief among the reasons are: the fact that the starting point of the dialogue was much more incipient than in Latin America; the nonexistence of defined leadership roles in the region among civil society organizations; and the complexity of the politic dynamics in some countries of the region, with electoral processes ahead and HIV and the law being a sensitive issue. That said, the mere celebration of the dialogue in the Caribbean was a breakthrough, as it was the first time ever that the topics addressed were voiced and addressed in the public arena.

Whenever national dialogues – subsequent to the regional dialogues – have been held their contributions to this outcome have been direct and tangible. In Panama, the dialogue triggered first-ever interaction between the judicial and the sexual diversity community, and broke with a dormant revision of the HIV law while offering possibility of changes in the near future. In Belize, the dialogue had an outstanding impact: for the first time most at-risk populations (MARPs) and PLHIV were given a voice and publicly advocating for their rights. This led to multiplier effects derived from the fact population at large

learned there was a national response that could be joined.

The regional programme has made a substantial, visible and recognized contribution to achievements in HIV/AIDS, due to the broad-based continued support and follow-up of the HIV/AIDS team to the aforementioned processes. This support has included a mix of technical assistance, networking assets, strategic guidance and linkages with funds and has constituted the opposite to a one-off support approach.

EFFICIENCY

The regional programme has made good use of its financial and human resources. The execution rate was considered to be well above normal for UNDP. A good example of efficiency was the use of the reports produced and experiences gained through the regional programme projects (such as PAPEP, reports on democracy, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, PROLOGO) as methodological content for courses given by the Virtual School. Virtual School trainees also learned through sharing their experiences with the network of students from other Latin American countries. In addition, the virtual courses provide easy access to information and a space for individuals to get to know UNDP and its various projects. The communication strategy of both RBLAC and RSC included websites, e-bulletin, newsletters and web platforms that indirectly benefited a significant number of other beneficiaries as it regularly featured and highlighted tools and reports beyond the projects and activities.

The Democracy Reports on Citizenship made important contributions in terms of regional thinking and presenting a new way of looking at democracy based on the specific history and context of Latin America, which differed from the concept of democracy commonly used. While political scientists in Europe and USA emphasize consideration of the democratic regime as main trait of a democratic system, the approach in Latin America focuses on the question of

citizenship (political, civil, and socio-economic citizenship) and the democratic state, in addition to the democratic electoral regime. From their own small investment, the regional programme and partners were able to mobilize additional resources from donors and, significantly, from peers such as other UN agencies and government partners. As well as bolstering resources, this served to strengthen alliances and promote national ownership. One example was the work led by the gender practice area to foster dialogue and participation of women and support women parliamentarians in the region. About one third of the financial resources for this initiative was used as seed money providing direct support through the country offices in Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile to mobilize additional resources from donors, UN agencies and government partners in country.

In terms of achieving more with the same resources, the evaluation found an example where there is a high level of activities and these are gradually moving towards an articulated 'set of activities'. In El Salvador, where the country office has significant leverage with the Government, the country office used a PAPEP report to guide a strategic planning process and gradually bring together a series of disparate activities aligned to corporate goals to maximize the use of technical and financial resources provided by the regional programme. However, this example of using the regional programme strategically to make the most of its services does not seem to be widely spread across the region.

Limited resources require further enhanced concentration of efforts and an even more focused approach with more realistic targets. The regional programme engages in various types of activities (networking and dialogue, analysis and advocacy, research, policy advice) in different thematic areas and targeting a range of constituents (including country offices, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, women, youth, government at all levels). Since the amount of resources is small, it is not realistic to expect concrete and sustainable results if funds are limited and scattered.

However, perhaps as opposed to dispersing them across a large base, results could have been enhanced through the concentration of efforts on a smaller base with more focused approach.

Efficiencies were enhanced at country offices through the associate experts network that expanded the range of expertise available and streamlined procurement processes facilitating the contracting processed for country offices. Country offices have appreciated and positively evaluated the timely support and the quality and efficiency of services.

There have been some difficulties with regard to overlaps between country teams and the RSC HIV/AIDS team. The main reason behind this is the lack of installed capacity in country offices in HIV/AIDS. Not all country offices have focal points, and when they do, they have many other responsibilities. In many cases, to ensure that activities are effectively implemented, RSC steps in and contacts national stakeholders directly, which is often perceived as bypassing the role of the country office. The RSC HIV/AIDS team, established in 2009, has played a key role in mitigating the inefficiencies created by inadequate technical capacity in the country offices. RSC has had a role in ensuring continuity of the regional response by providing induction packages (strategic guidance, technical support), promoting the systematization of experiences and mobilizing funds (often from the HIV Thematic Trust Fund) to support national-level actions.

SUSTAINABILITY

The most sustainable aspects in this outcome have been the knowledge gained by individual participants in each capacity development activities.

PAPEP has positioned itself as a highly relevant methodology, with a highly specialized network of experts in 13 countries. It has provided technical assistance and information at the request of BCPR, BDP, DPA and country offices on a cost-shared basis, or with funding from other agencies, such as SICA (*Sistema*

de Integración Centroamericana) and USAID. PAPEP also provides analysis for UNDP, the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT operations and strategies, and has been highlighted as a key project for development and a relevant tool for South-South cooperation. Over the past few years, PAPEP has gradually been losing support and financial resources, and its small financial base has hampered planning. In order to maintain its reputation as a neutral, open and independent tool, accessible to everyone, the project cannot charge governments or the private sector for its products and reports. A proposal has been put forward for the project to be restructured into a think-tank dedicated, among other things, to promoting the creation of strategic advisory units for Latin American governments.

RSC still plays a major role in stimulating the mid-term processes promoted by the regional and national dialogues given that national and regional actors have not yet taken enough ownership of the processes. This may present sustainability challenges, which is already the case in Belize, where even when the dialogue implied a national breakthrough the action plan with recommendations is not being followed upon by civil society organizations. In this scenario, the HIV/AIDS team is developing an exit strategy based on ensuring that the dialogues supported spur nationally anchored advocacy processes. RSC is following up with countries that have decided to take action after regional dialogue, and the plan is to bring together actors from different countries with national follow-up plans that share similar advocacy routes, e.g. workshops for supreme court judges of countries planning to reform HIV law or advocacy workshops with parliamentarian groups in countries that have decided to focus on the gender identity law.

Accountability and transparency of public institutions is strengthened. (Outcome 32)

RELEVANCE

Contributions have been relevant to the specific needs of the region, and programme interventions under this outcome are aligned with UNDP's mandate, strategic framework, and governance priorities. As described below, activities have successfully enhanced governing institutions and/or increasing transparency and accountability. To strengthen democratic governance, the regional programme is working with country offices and selected governments towards strengthening the capacities of public administration for better transparency and accountability as well as to improve operating systems and inclusiveness processes.

The Transparency and Accountability in Local Governments (TRAALOG) is an example of initiative, which over the past two years has given relevance to the issue of transparency and accountability in the region helping to build capacity in a thematic area that was not explicitly visible before. The regional programme has changed the day-to-day management of participating public institutions, making them more accountable and effective in their response to the public.

EFFECTIVENESS

Considering the small amount of resources available, the regional programme effectively contributed to strengthening the accountability and transparency of public institutions it collaborates with. According to different stakeholders, the support provided has been of satisfactory quality and responsive to local needs. Services were rated high in quality and input was appropriate to country offices and local stakeholder's specific demands for technical assistance.

One of the most effective contributions has been through System and Management Capacity Development for Governance (SIGOB). Over 20 years of implementation, SIGOB has

implemented methodologies (processes, systems and software) to enhance public management in the region.

SIGOB has methodologies supported by software modules¹²⁹ built by RBLAC that has strengthened public institutions – head of governments and ministries, autonomous public entities, judicial organizations, and accountability bodies at the national, subnational and local level – to improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of public policies and processes. SIGOB methods have been implemented in about 170 institutions, and are in use by about 15,000 public employees and the offices of nine Presidents in the region¹³⁰. SIGOB has a valuable network of established clientele from high-level public administrators, many of whom carry the project with them as they leave positions and move to other public administration posts. In 2011 and 2012 alone, SIGOB implemented or updated management systems in 21 institutions from nine countries.¹³¹ SIGOB is a project with identified benefits in streamlining processes, transparency and accountability.

- In Argentina, the Province of Chaco has implemented the system in the Ministry of Planning and Environment with good results related to efficiencies in strategic planning processes and effectiveness by grounding them to reality through establishing links between planning with budgeting processes.
- In the Dominican Republic, the project assisted in the transition of government, through work with team of the newly elected government, implementing systems to design the new government's plan, including setting up the goals of the new government, and determining a series of steps to achieve those, among other things.

- In Brazil, in addition to SIGOB modules implemented prior to 2008 in the Presidency, Ministry of Planning and in the City of Sao Paulo, four SIGOB modules are currently in implementation in the Ministry of Environment.
- Satisfactory results have also been achieved in Mexico, at the subnational levels, including in the judicial level in Michoacán, in the area of citizen security, enhancing communications with citizens and collaboration of civil society in public policies.

SIGOB training and dissemination materials have been translated into English and are expected to provide Caribbean countries with support to improve public management, service delivery and strengthen the accountability and transparency of public institutions.

TRAALOG also contributed to a gradual process of building of local capacities (at the level of the country offices and specific countries) to assist public institutions work towards improving accountability and transparency. PROLOGO is another project that secured municipal financing. PROLOGO centres in three municipalities became places for meetings and public participation and had positive effects on the strengthening of civil society organizations in these municipalities. The initiative also promoted empowerment of beneficiaries and their ownership of the knowledge acquired.

Despite the effective contributions, there is still room to enhance coordination between the regional programme and UNDP global and national structures, particularly with country offices. As in outcome 31, the evaluation found issues of miscommunication and/or lack of coordinated action at the local level under

¹²⁹ These include modules for Results-Oriented Government Action Plans; Management of Daily Presidential Agendas, Tracking and Archiving Official Correspondence and Records; Managing Relations between Government and Society; Communication Action Plans, Government-Citizen Forums; Public Opinion Monitoring.

¹³⁰ Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Dominican Republic

¹³¹ Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Panama and Haiti.

outcome 32. In some countries and in certain cases, relationships may be established directly with governments, bypassing the country office, creating a situation in which strategies and responses to governments are not coordinated as 'one UNDP'.

EFFICIENCY

The regional programme has made good use of its financial and human resources. The execution rate was considered to be well above normal for UNDP. Regarding the efficiency of regional programme administration, some improvements have been made since RSC in Panama became operational.

Closer coordination with PAPEP and SIGOB could enhance opportunities for the regional programme to benefit from their positioning, at the core of the most important decision-making processes in many countries in the region. These two projects continue to operate somewhat independently. Their relative autonomy provides them with needed flexibility and enhances their efficiency, but for the regional programme, this autonomy sometimes also limits opportunities to use these consolidated projects as tools to enhance UNDP leverage with national governments and further enhance synergies. SIGOB and PAPEP have high visibility and access to a wide range of institutions and high-level public officials at national, subnational and local government but the country offices and regional programme do not necessarily benefit from them beyond project interventions for enhanced leverage.

There are also missed opportunities to build on the knowledge and methods of these projects, for example, PAPEP's methodology of scenario building could be used to assist in regional programme decision-making on sensitive issues such as drug trafficking. There are also opportunities for scaling up these projects through providing tools to enable the democratic governance focal points to engage in further promoting these projects and their methodologies to non-participating institutions, enabling

the democratic governance focal points to being more proactive in terms of promoting the project to a wider number of institutions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Contributions made through SIGOB have proven to be particularly sustainable, although it was not possible to analyse the situation of sustainability of each intervention in each one of the 170 institutions where it has been implemented. The project generates revenue through payment for the software and technical assistance by governments, and, as such, sustainability is not a central issue as long as the administrative structures continue to enable successful competition with similar products. The visibility of the results obtained from SIGOB systems helps to maintain continuity through government transitions, although there have been cases in which contracts have been discontinued with change in public administration. There is a high level of local ownership by SIGOB users, many of whom have had past experiences with the project and have implemented SIGOB systems in previous public sector functions.

In any case, SIGOB administrative structures are solid and knowledge exists among a team of professionals. Further work can be done to support and facilitate the expansion of the project throughout the region. Even in countries where it is active, SIGOB is not yet widely known and its success can be more widely disseminated. Work can also be done to train country office officials in the basics of the system to enable them to promote the project to further enhance its sustainability.

The sustainability of regional programme interventions to strengthen the accountability and transparency of public institutions will depend on how countries deal with the challenges and transformations taking place in the region. Corruption at various levels of public institutions has spread widely and many countries have begun to face parliamentary crisis. Increased violence and drug trafficking are also affecting confidence in public

institutions. To continue to be relevant and sustainable, the regional programme needs to continue to support public institutions and civil societies in the region to address these challenges and strengthen democracy.

Since the regional programme is a programme of the UN – a highly respected institution – there are also high expectations that it will continue to tackle key thematic topics (including sensitive ones) in a meaningful and perhaps more direct way, through strategic interventions. The regional dimension often serves as a strategic means to promote and advocate sensitive issues that country offices may not have an opportunity to promote.

Some work has been initiated through TRAALOG, to enhance levels of collaboration between RBLAC/RSC-LAC/BDP/other UNDP regional centres, with country offices, local partners and counterparts to mainstream the sensitive anti-corruption issues into the democratic governance and human development agenda of UNDP. The regional programme can and should continue engagement to encourage favourable ground for targeted policy advice, innovative knowledge exchange and effective technical support.

3.3 CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

Capacities of national institutions to manage risks strengthened. (Outcome 33)

RELEVANCE

UNDP's contribution to *strengthening capacities of national institutions to manage risks* was relevant and well aligned with the main UNDP and regional priorities for development. The programme interventions are framed within UNDP's mandate and are consistent with its Strategic

Framework 2008-2013. The regional programme understands that CPR mainstreaming has become a focus area in the Strategic Plan and is not intended to suggest a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather to respond to the high demand for support in this area that matches UNDP strengths.¹³²

The CPR area has responded to demands with appropriate quality technical support and in a timely manner. Due to the financial crisis in various donor countries, the CPR practice area has successfully adapted its intervention strategy from a funding approach to a technical added value one. The CPR Unit has also managed to meet demands, occasionally at short notice such as the crisis unleashed by the confrontation between the Government of Panama and Ngobe-Bugle indigenous communities. In this case, the country office requested support from RSC and, within hours, a UNDP strategy was designed to facilitate the dialogue process.

The CPR area was flexible enough to adapt methodologies on democratic dialogue to the specificities and needs of different countries. The CPR team has developed activities and initiatives at the country level, based on the specific demands of governments and country offices. The process has followed a bottom-up approach, where support stems from the local/national level. The regional programme has adapted to changing environments in the region by implementing a horizontal and participatory approach. Sources have highlighted the positive spirit of dialogue of the regional programme, and its ability to adapt to specific national needs.

The CPR's main relevance to the regional programme is that activities are clearly at regional level and could not be delivered by any country office alone. The unit has been dealing with specific institutional mandates, technical capacity, regional knowledge and politically sensitive

¹³² This section of the Strategic Plan is informed by the UNDP strategic vision on assistance to crisis-affected countries DP/2007/20/Rev.1), which provides background on the work of UNDP in this area.

issues. Where countries have shared common problems, the regional programme has brought them together to learn from each other, often developing networks along the way. In such cases, the results from the regional approach are therefore greater than the sum of the results from separate national interventions.¹³³

EFFECTIVENESS

Most initiatives developed by the CPR Unit are considered effective. The advice and technical support for dialogue processes has positively helped to transform conflicts, increase the resilience of democratic governance structures, and build peace. It has developed, disseminated, and applied diverse social technologies to support conflict prevention, support dialogue and management efforts, providing specific technical support and capacity-building to country needs. It has also established partnerships with other committed regional institutions. The Democratic Dialogue Project is one particular initiative that has effectively supported dialogue and consensus-building initiatives in the LAC region.

RSC has proven to be effective in dialogue processes across the LAC region through high-quality technical assistance and a horizontal approach combining the country office knowledge of political context with qualified input from RSC. Up to 12 countries engaged in dialogue initiatives, including their design, implementation and facilitation. This includes different dialogue processes in countries with political and social tensions. In terms of social cohesion, there are several examples of dialogue processes fostered by RSC in countries as well. For example, a mediation process led by RSC and the UNDP country office in Panama¹³⁴ was a successful

example of dialogue with lessons for the entire region on conflict prevention between ethnic groups, government and private companies. The economic development model in the LAC countries is sometimes contrary to the priorities of indigenous communities, who see nature and environmental resources as sacred.¹³⁵ In Panama, a planned public/private hydroelectric project in the Ngobe-Bugle region caused a strong reaction from indigenous leaders and communities.¹³⁶ UNDP was asked to facilitate dialogue between government officials and indigenous leaders and the result was a formal commitment from the Government to consult the ethnic groups for project development in their regions.

The successful process in Panama also led to a national law signed by the Government on previous consultation of indigenous communities; in the future every project affecting indigenous people will be agreed upon with their leaders and a percentage of the revenues will be disbursed to the Ngobe-Bugle people. The input from the CPR practice area was critical for the result. The methodological approach was appropriate and the process resulted in the solution of a potential governance crisis in Panama. The outcome is a national law and also a very important experience for other countries to learn from. Other examples of dialogue are:

- In Honduras, within the framework of the Support to the Reconciliation Process for Strengthening the Democratic System of Honduras project, technical support was provided to the country office to build a political platform for dialogue and reform in the country. The national round table for dialogue included an analysis strategy and a long-term vision on national agreements with political parties, civil society,

¹³³ See page 23: UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution at the Regional Level to Development and Corporate Results', New York, 2010.

¹³⁴ Letter of agreement between Panama and RSC LAC 2012.

¹³⁵ Aiming to protect environment and ethnic needs, ILO agreement number 169 demands consultations with ethnic minorities prior to development projects in protected areas. The indigenous communities must be consulted and approve any mining or infrastructure project in their land.

¹³⁶ The riots and road blocks affected the entire country having big economic losses (about USD 3 million a day in lost commerce), social tension and violence.

government and international aid agencies. RSC also supported the country office and national counterparts during the political crisis resulting in a transitional process to democratic elections.

- In Trinidad and Tobago, a methodology was developed for the Ministry of Finance to support a dialogue on the national budget, and covering a larger consultation on key national priorities called the 'partnership pact' with the new Government.
- In Mexico, the methodological design, facilitation and systematization of different working meetings were supported within the framework of the institutional strengthening process and led to implementation of public policies on climate change towards the 16th Conference of Parties (COP 16). Training sessions and dialogue methodologies provided by RSC resulted in the Internally Displaced People Law in the state of Chiapas.
- In Guatemala, the country office conceptualized and launched the National Permanent Dialogue with support from RSC, and capacity development on multistakeholder dialogue processes was provided to all political parties. In many cases, this support has been carried out thanks to the joint work of different agencies or institutions within the UN system.
- In Nicaragua, the dialogue process contributed to the national law on small-arms control thanks to developing capacities within the police forces on arms registry.

Some of the most effective initiatives of the CPR practice area contributed to strengthening national capacities with knowledge transfer and capacity development by facilitating an active community of practice among

the 17 participating country offices. This has systematized and documented dialogue experiences, lessons learned and good practices into a virtual course and several publications. In 2011, 514 people participated in training activities jointly organized with the Democratic Dialogue Project, and in the same year 45,500 visitors accessed the website. Since its creation there have been 491,722 downloads of dialogue documents. Different consultations conclude that all these efforts had enabled country offices and some national counterparts to access methodological tools and skills in dialogue processes. In Bolivia, RSC developed and published a systematization document 'This Is Not How We Had Imagined It' about negotiation and dialogue.

EFFICIENCY

The CPR practice area was efficient in developing strategic partnerships and fund-raising close to USD 9 million for the region. The number of CPR practice area missions increased by 170 percent in two years. A 15 percent reduction in resources¹³⁷ has not affected efficiency and the technical team has been able to respond to requests by countries in a timely manner, including unforeseen situations such as those in Panama, SICA, Haiti, Dominican Republic or Mexico¹³⁸.

In execution of resources, the level is suboptimal, considering that the area has the third largest budget but ranks second to last among all the thematic and cross-cutting areas of RSC in terms of budget execution. The performance level recorded for the period showed a slight decrease from 78 percent in 2008 to 72 percent in 2011. In contrast with the high levels of satisfaction, the suboptimal level of financial performance can be understood because many of the activities

¹³⁷ According to the Service Tracker of RSC and the annual budget.

¹³⁸ Abrupt conflict between indigenous communities and the Government in Panama, the need for a violence observatory in Dominican Republic and Haiti, the methodological support for the formulation of the security strategy for Central America and the peace dialogues with displaced communities in Mexico, were all sudden demands from the country offices to RSC.

in the CPR area have no financial cost, i.e. ‘non-project’ activities that generate significant results at no cost.

SUSTAINABILITY

Political, technical and economic sustainability was the rationale behind CPR interventions, fostered by: capacity development of country offices and national counterparts; permanent access to the CPR area of practice; and promoting the subscription of formal laws on dialogue processes (e.g. Mexico, Panama, and Honduras).

Although no exit strategies were formalized, the CPR area has maintained continuity and avoided sporadic interventions. Processes were followed up, replication was sought and capacity transfer and knowledge management promoted to reduce future learning needs. The democratic dialogue process has generated knowledge through the support of a community of practice that has more than 50,000 visits a year, where there are different knowledge documents available to the country offices and partners in the region.¹³⁹

Regional, national and local capacities to assure citizen security are strengthened. (Outcome 34)

RELEVANCE

UNDP’s contribution to outcome 34 has been relevant and the programme intervention is framed within UNDP’s mandate and consistent with its Strategic Framework 2008-2011. The regional programme aimed to strengthen national capacities in crisis prevention and recovery and mainstreaming.¹⁴⁰ Contributions to this outcome have been responsive and timely.¹⁴¹ Unlike other outcomes, the design of the regional programme and the definition of CPR outcomes were based

on consultation processes with different countries through meetings and workshops with BCPR and RBLAC. This level of consultation has enabled the programme to plan more appropriately and respond to the real needs and opportunities of the region.

The regional programme has been relevant and strategic in positioning the citizen security theme in the public agenda at the regional level. The regional programme also has the potential to strategically position this debate at the global level. UNDP is deemed as a responsive and trustworthy partner in citizen-security issues particularly to governments, and the only international cooperation agency accepted and valued by member countries as a partner in methodological issues for citizen security. The programme’s regional knowledge, access to experiences in different countries, technical expertise in RSC, leadership in relevant CoPs and CPR expert networks and neutrality in conflicts, have been the basis of this reputation. UNDP’s leadership in security issues has reached a regional scope, through SICA’s security strategy.

The CPR practice area has developed a critical mass with a group of senior practitioners with citizen-security expertise in different countries and an operational community of practice. CPR methods and models have inspired other models and projects of national partners, UN agencies and other donors. A USD 45 million Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) project was based on a UNDP model. The success of this support and the achievement of the strategic positioning of UNDP are based on its ability to manage regional knowledge, transfer practices, and provide technical assistance with innovative strategies, such as having one country office help build the capacity of another.

¹³⁹ These documents include manuals and online courses on democratic dialogue, citizen participation and theory of change methodology; bulletins’ summaries of evaluations and documentation of processes.

¹⁴⁰ This section of the Strategic Plan is informed by the UNDP strategic vision on assistance to crisis-affected countries (DP/2007/20/Rev.1), which provides background on the work of UNDP in this area.

¹⁴¹ Examples of the timeliness and responsiveness of the regional programme was observed in Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador, and SICA, among others.

There is room for improvement of advice on public policy and institutional reform to include long-term citizen-security measures. So far, there is little consistency in terms of citizen-security policies and there is not a long-term vision as the theme is a sensitive political issue where short-term measures are often implemented to impact public opinion.

The design of the programme to address CPR issues has successfully contributed to empowering the region by transferring capacities to different governments and country offices with tailored tools, methodologies, strategic planning and conceptual models. In El Salvador, gun-control tools and public policies have been adopted with UNDP assistance, and the national government has implemented the UNDP citizen-security model with the INJUVE Youth Institute. This capacity-building was replicated in other countries, with the El Salvador country office helping the Honduras country office to address citizen security and crisis prevention. The Honduras country office then supported the Dominican Republic country office and its Government in the development of a violence observatory.

The prevention approach to citizen security targets gender and women's rights, as well as marginalized groups such as youth, ethnic groups and marginalized communities through the promotion of dialogue, participation and inclusion. Interviews and document review point to achievements in the inclusion of marginalized population groups through policy-making for internally displaced populations in Mexico, a consultation law for indigenous communities in Panama, and peace dialogues with young gang members in Honduras and El Salvador.

Gender and violence against women should have been explicitly included in the regional programme under this outcome. This would be aligned with the United Nations campaign

UNITE, an issue very high on the agenda of corporate UNDP and the major focus of the Global UNDP Gender Strategy 2008-2011: "To adopt measures that contribute to the elimination of all forms of violence and their manifestations against women, especially homicide of women, 'femicide', as well as the elimination of unilateral measures that run counter to international law and the provisions of the United Nations Charter, whose fundamental consequences are borne by women, girl children and adolescents".

EFFECTIVENESS

One of the limitations of the evaluation is the low quality of CPR indicators and targets in the results framework of RPD. The issue of citizen security through prevention is difficult to measure given the nature of aspects such as the degree of ownership, empowerment, capacity-building, adaptation of methodologies, etc. However, there are proxies that could be helpful. The CPR Unit is effective in contributing to strategic outcomes in the region, based mainly on the team's technical capacity and experience, but there is no M&E system with procedures and evidence for decision-making. This lack of good results-based information aligned to proper indicators to inform decision-making leads to inefficiencies. The results matrixes and monitoring systems mostly report on activities, not results, and are still insufficient to reflect results and promote corrections and even drive focus in a more strategic way to invest the limited resources.

Country offices have expressed high levels of satisfaction regarding the delivery of services and activities by the CPR area. CPR has the highest level of¹⁴² satisfaction among the thematic and cross-cutting areas of RSC with 95 percent acceptance, 8 points higher than the next area (environment and energy at 87 percent). This is due to successful results in different areas of work, as described further.

¹⁴² Refer to Annex 5 of this report online:

<<http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>>.

The strengthening of SICA's Security Strategy for Central America is considered an effective contribution of the regional programme. The achievement was due to the inclusion of different areas of violence prevention such as local security, youth violence and gender-based violence leading to the design of 22 regional projects, nine of which are already funded and in implementation. Importantly, the support to security strategy includes an important opening to support regional M&E capacities through the construction of the M&E strategy for the CA Security Strategy.

Another significant contribution was the development of the Caribbean HDR 2010-2012 on citizen security, covering seven English- and Dutch-speaking countries, though unfortunately omitting Belize. The report allowed better understanding of the root causes of polarization and lack of social cohesion, as well as their impact on citizen security. The Caribbean HDR provided fresh evidence, data and information on security in the region and also has stimulated discussion on the issue of crime prevention and provided new solutions.¹⁴³ So far, four countries have developed country plans using the report, and it is expected that seven additional countries will do so. The CPR practice area also supported the HDR on Citizen Security in Central America that was launched in 2009, with a high level of political participation in several countries.

Policy advocacy and consultation processes were successful with stakeholders in different countries. The CPR practice area provided technical assistance for the formulation of Costa Rica's national policy on citizen security and peace¹⁴⁴ in the 2010 policy consultation process. In Guatemala, CPR supported the country office to identify priorities and operationalize the National Agreement for the Advance of Security and

Justice, signed by the Presidents of the Executive, Legislative, Supreme Court and the Attorney General and subscribed by civil society. Also, in El Salvador and Honduras, national policies on citizen security were implemented with the support of RSC. The CPR technical team also supported the Brazilian National Conference on Public Security, where the national policy was validated.¹⁴⁵

Another achievement of the CPR practice area has been support to foster national data gathering and analysis. Based on the Colombian experience, violence observatories were supported in Honduras, Dominican Republic and Haiti, helping to better understand the challenges and informing national strategies.

The regional programme has also been effective in advocating for the prevention of armed violence by providing technical assistance for the development of tools and laws to control the illicit trafficking in small arms, their parts and ammunition. A guide on the establishment of national commissions was developed with the support of the regional programme. This was notable in countries such as El Salvador, where UNDP is considered the most-qualified adviser on small-arms control and restriction. In Venezuela, RSC supported the parliamentary and presidential commissions on small-arms control to revise the existing law and adopt 20 presidential decrees on practical disarmament measures. RSC articulated and coordinated technical resources from Panama, Geneva and the country office to assist the Parliament; and a group of Congress members travelled to Brazil with the country office in order to learn from disarmament experiences in Rio. The result was the review and adaptation of the law and the trust granted by the Government of Venezuela to UNDP in CPR matters.

¹⁴³ Memo of the 2012 Security Community of Practice.

¹⁴⁴ Costa Rica ADR

¹⁴⁵ During this process, approximately 1,000 CONSEG attendees were trained and also a knowledge fair was organized in Brasilia where 42 local best practices were presented and 707 cooperation agreements were signed.

The regional programme has made important achievements regarding local management of security through situational and institutional assessments of the state of local citizen security; design of comprehensive local policies; development of equipment master plans; knowledge transfer; toolkits and training courses. Technical support to the MDG-F Joint Programme on Conflict Prevention in Brazil led to local assessments and security plans in three municipalities. In other countries, exchange of experiences was facilitated through exchange visits and seminars, helping to raise visibility and positioning of the issue. Training sessions on citizen security in Brazil, Panama, El Salvador, Paraguay, Ecuador, Guatemala and Colombia were imparted to 4,000 people. These activities led to different success cases like in Guatemala, where USD 10 million were allocated for the Peace Building Fund aimed at security and justice reform, including reform of police forces and other institutions to allow broader access to justice for indigenous communities.

The UNDP gender practice area in Panama has been credited as a major contributor to results achieved in the region, through the UNITE campaign led by UN Women. All countries have reported activities related to the campaign, mostly led by interagency gender thematic groups. In five countries, the campaign has reported actions led by the national governments (Costa Rica, Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Uruguay). In Costa Rica, the Legislative Assembly adhered formally to the campaign. Different awareness campaigns were reported to have been led by national entities in Paraguay, Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay. There have also been a number of capacity-development initiatives on gender-based violence for police and prosecutors, most notably in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The CPR team established an ongoing partnership with the RSC-LAC gender practice area for the preparation of a toolkit and an online training course on gender and risk management. Specific modules on preventing violence against women and on policy and gender were included in the diploma course 'Public Policy Management for Citizen Security' in Panama and there was a remarkable joint effort on the South-South fair 'Commitment Central America'.

Noteworthy results have also been reported in a number of countries in relation to mainstreaming gender in citizen security policies and plans and the enforcement of Security Council Resolution 1325¹⁴⁶. The RSC gender practice area is recognized in a number of countries as a knowledge broker and a key contributor to these achievements. In Paraguay, the Ministry of Interior, the Secretary of Women and the General Department for Statistics signed an institutional agreement with UNDP and AECID (*Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo*) to establish a baseline for the creation of citizen security public policies that cover situations of violence affecting the public in general and women in particular. In 2011, a new law on gender violence to penalize perpetrators of violence against women was ratified in El Salvador, which has the highest rate of 'femicide' in the world. The gender practice area in Panama was credited as being one of the major contributors to these results through the support given to the Women's Parliamentary Group. In addition to addressing the challenges of organized crime and gang-related youth violence, the Central American Security Strategy presented by SICA in August 2011 included issues of human trafficking and violence against women. RSC, through the joint efforts of the gender and CPR practice areas, were credited as key contributors to this achievement.

¹⁴⁶ The Security Council adopted resolution (S/RES/1325) on women and peace and security on 31 October 2000 to reaffirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

EFFICIENCY

In this outcome, the CPR practice area was successful in developing strategic partnerships and raising funds for the region. For this outcome, the CPR team has engaged donors and development partners in support of the Central American Security Strategy, and has provided advice on management arrangements for an IADB-funded project on citizen security in Trinidad and Tobago, with procurement and legal advisers. In Belize, the CPR practice area supported the formulation of a USAID-funded project on youth violence. The gender practice area supported work to design a gender proposal for the donor's agreement with SICA, which resulted in the signing of a three-year funding programme of USD 20 million by Scandinavian countries to the Central American subregion.

SUSTAINABILITY

In the CPR area, knowledge products were developed to enhance the capacities of country offices, national and local institutions. The 'Knowledge Sharing Series' systematized and disseminated lessons learned by UNDP country offices. The citizen security team developed two publications, 'Academic Programme in Citizen Security: A Tool for Influencing Public Policies', and 'Towards Better Local Management of Security'.

Together with the Knowledge Management Unit, diagnostic and capacity assessment tools were developed and reviewed for inclusion in citizen security issues. KMU supported the development of a knowledge fair on citizen security in Brazil and Panama. Also, the first CoP on citizen security and conflict prevention was organized with 17 country offices participating. This event consolidated the conflict prevention/democratic dialogue and citizen security communities of practice, to provide UNDP offices with knowledge and regional experiences.

This evaluation provides evidence on the high level of popularity of CPR knowledge products.

Through randomly chosen documents, the cybermetric analysis indicated the level of dissemination of the knowledge products of the CPR area. Annex 5 (available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>) underscores the wide spread through the average number of websites referencing various CPR knowledge products.

Strengthened joint border area development initiatives and border conflicts peacefully resolved. (Outcome 35)

RELEVANCE

Although products are esteemed as a useful tool for future dialogues and preventing conflict in sensitive border zones, there is no hard evidence of effective contribution to this outcome. The UNDP RSC approached border conflicts by strengthening civil society initiatives, elaborating documents and contributing to training programmes or resolution of differences in the region. RSC and country offices in Ecuador and Colombia conducted an evaluation of the bi-national dialogue to capture political, social and cultural achievements, and identify lessons learned that can serve as a guide in similar contexts.

EFFECTIVENESS

The impact on and contribution to outcome 35 were jeopardized by several external factors related to political will, economic interests and lack of control of the use of outputs produced. Crisis prevention between governments is a highly politicized matter that is challenging to control or foresee by the regional programme or at the country levels, leaving very limited room for manoeuvre for UNDP to adequately strengthen joint border development initiatives or support border conflicts solutions; and there are no clear results as yet.

For example, the bi-national dialogue between Colombia and Ecuador is a regional priority in

terms of political stability but border-related conflicts exceeded UNDP capacity. Although, in general terms, relations between Colombia and Ecuador have historically been peaceful, political situations like instability in Ecuador, political polarization in Colombia, drugs trafficking and armed confrontation, led to suspension of diplomatic relations and a subsequent impact on bi-national dialogue. The friction between the countries was deepened by sensitive issues, such as that of Colombian displaced people and refugees in Ecuador and the implementation of the Democratic Security Policy in Colombia. The most critical point was the bombing of a guerrilla camp in Ecuadorian territory by the Colombian air force, closing diplomatic relationship between the both countries and bringing more tension to the region.

EFFICIENCY

The efficiency level of this outcome suffered due to external factors, execution level was lower than other outcomes affecting the overall performance of CPR initiatives linked to this outcome.

SUSTAINABILITY

There is no evidence of sustainability of the processes fostered on bi-national dialogue, and there is no significant technical capacity increased in the country offices or national actors that could continue the efforts made until now. At the political level, peace agreements and dialogue processes could be threatened by political volatility, economic issues or territorial differences. Recently a new conflict has arisen between Nicaragua and Colombia over the San Andres islands and sea property rights. In this case, UNDP could play a role in facilitating the dialogue between both countries but the possible results are not easy to predict.

Strengthened regional, national and local capacities to manage and mitigate the risks of disaster. (Outcome 36)

RELEVANCE

The outcome and the contribution by UNDP to its accomplishment are relevant. Making the transition to a disaster risk reduction (DRR) orientation has emerged as a key priority for the region, and therefore the contribution of UNDP in the field is highly valued. Environmental disasters are increasing across the LAC region, creating economic and social costs that impact especially negatively on the poor, women and children. Communities, municipalities, subnational regions and indeed entire countries can be knocked off their respective development paths by such events.

The regional programme has made a concerted effort to respond to the growing consensus to making DRR a priority in the LAC region and has assisted in guiding the region away from over-reliance on recovery responses to disasters. In this regard, UNDP has been working to establish the necessary changes in attitudes, policies, practices and procedures across different countries, with the aim of encouraging the transition to disaster prevention. Although there are instances of strong capacity in countries such as Cuba, there remains a strong need for more effective DRR capacities across the LAC region, which faces an incredible cross-section of circumstances in which disasters can occur.

The prioritization of DRR in the regional programme clearly reflects one of the most critical challenges faced by the region, and represents a vital strategic cornerstone for its progress towards human development. The consideration of natural disasters as a regional programme priority issue has had two important consequences: a shift from a more traditional emphasis on emergency response towards DRR; and an integrated approach to disaster management, linking thematic areas and interventions, such as climate and environment, and poverty reduction.

EFFECTIVENESS

Stakeholders have positively assessed the effectiveness of DRR activities administered through

the regional programme and BCPR. Practitioners, national and local governments, institutions and UNDP country offices have been supported in a number of small ways by the DRR Unit of the CPR cluster, jointly supported by RBLAC and BCPR to achieve results. Some of the strongest positive reaction on the accomplishments of the DRR Unit is reserved for the CoP where individuals involved in multiple CoPs consider the DRR CoP to be the most useful. South-South cooperation (SSC) through the DRR CoP is also enriched by the multidisciplinary backgrounds of its participants that allow the CoP to draw on a broad range of perspectives and experiences. SSC facilitated by the DRR Unit in the aftermath of the Chilean earthquake is credited as being successful in the cooperation between Cuba and Chile, and saw the adaptation of the Cuban approach to local disaster prevention.

Over the last four years, the DDR Unit was found to have channelled regional programme activities through a better structure and logic than was the case during the last phase of the regional programme. Some of the strongest positive reaction on the accomplishments of the DRR Unit is reserved for the CoP where individuals involved in multiple CoPs consider the DRR CoP to be the most useful. SSC through the DRR CoP is also enriched by the multidisciplinary backgrounds of its participants that allow the CoP to draw on a broad range of perspectives and experiences. The DRR CoP champions the sharing of the experiences of its members and this is highly appreciated and is closely related to another area of strength, SSC. A successful example of SSC is one that the DRR Unit facilitated between Cuba and Chile in the aftermath of the Chilean earthquake, which saw the adaptation of the Cuban approach to local disaster prevention. The DRR Unit's roster of consultants is well regarded but concern was expressed regarding the absence of strong English-speaking candidates on the roster to support the Caribbean.

Most country offices have received direct support on DRR-related matters. Some of the

more noteworthy examples include: working in the difficult environment of post-earthquake Haiti to oversee USD 100 million in assistance including carrying out the task of debris removal. In Haiti and Honduras, a contribution was made in the systemization of practices and experiences. The regional programme assisted Haiti and the Dominican Republic in finalizing a memorandum of understanding on seismic risks reduction. The regional programme assisted countries such as Paraguay to formulate policies on disaster risk management. In Uruguay, over the course of a number of projects the DRR Unit assisted with the integration of the concept of DDR into the national development agenda. At the subregional level, support was provided to the Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC) to establish the Central American Policy for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management.

Successfully integrating gender into DRR planning is a long-standing objective and during the last programming cycle, there is evidence of significant results. This includes integrating gender into the early recovery strategy in Honduras that has resulted in changes to ground-level practices. In Argentina, the issue of risk management and gender was addressed with support from the RSC gender team in introducing practical concepts, and providing specialized technical assistance and the systemization of experiences. As a result, Argentina is looking at elaborating the first national plan with a through gender approach incorporated into the DRR component. The Minister of Interior and Supreme Council of Women has signed an agreement to continue collaborating on the issue.

In 2010, RSC contributed to the Brasilia Consensus that introduced a focus on gender, race and ethnicity in addressing the causes and consequences of natural disasters.

There have also been results in the critical area of local planning in relation to disaster prevention. The recovery programme following Storms Noel

and Olga in the Dominican Republic in 2007 was designed to strengthen national and local capacities and improve interagency coordination. The ultimate outcome was to contribute to changing the approach in the Dominican Republic to post-disaster recovery. In 2011, the initiative won honourable mention from the *Concurso Compartir Conocimiento para el Desarrollo* as an example of best practice. The initiative highlighted the issue of livelihoods and DRR and is noted for a high level of female participation.

The regional programme is a strong source of support on matters related to emergency response in countries such as Chile, Costa Rica, Haiti and others that have been impacted by disasters. In 2009, the regional programme provided critical support to Costa Rica at a time when improved capacity and organization was required within the lead agency for emergency response, the National Emergency Commission. Subsequently, in response to the flooding brought on by Hurricane Thomas, the Costa Rican Department of Health, which had participated in earthquake capacity-building activities organized by DRR, sought further assistance from UNDP.

Haiti was by far the most significant disaster response test the UN has faced in the region. The challenge was considerable and made more difficult by the inherent circumstances in Haiti regarding the extent of poverty, unplanned urban sprawl in the earthquake zone and the decimation of DRR capacity during the earthquake. UNDP struggled in these circumstances.

The inactivity of the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) over the last few years due to internal matters has been a setback for DRR-related activity in the Caribbean. CRMI was positioned to make inroads across the English- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Haiti on a variety of critical issues including exploring the relationship between climate change and disaster reduction. The absence of CRMI has hampered the regional programme's ability to mobilize additional resources

and explore partnerships. CRMI is now looking to assist in the replication of the Cuban Risk Reduction Management Centres in five Caribbean countries. The planning for this began during the first phase. To the credit of the regional programme, important decisions were taken and carried out to maintain the DRR capacity of the Cuban and Barbados offices, where the bulk of corporate knowledge and experience in managing CRMI resides. Despite the hiatus of CRMI, activities at the country level continued in the Caribbean.

The Risk Reduction Management Centre (RRMC)'s South-South cooperation initiative was expected to be a pillar component of CRMI Phase II. Planning began a while ago but it is now just getting started. As for further SSC, CRMI has been the Caribbean lead on the 2009-2012 South-South Cooperation between Pacific and Caribbean SIDS on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management project, though the project is led by UNDP Pacific, not the Panama Regional Centre.

There are minor concerns regarding communication between the Caribbean region and the regional programme that meant that opportunities to disburse funds to country offices dealing with emergency situations were lost. There were also instances of Caribbean country offices not disbursing funds that were provided to them. These are small amounts of money.

EFFICIENCY

In general, the only time the DRR Unit is given access to significant financial resources is when a disaster occurs. This is counterintuitive as financial resources could be better spent in preventing disasters. DRR-related activity is defined by determining how best to disburse small amounts of money efficiently. Efficiency has been achieved and, defined by sharing knowledge, expertise and building relationships. Apart from DIPECHO, administered by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), there are not a

lot of options for funding. DIPECHO resources are meant for use at the country level and not to support a regional programme.¹⁴⁷

The DRR Unit is not tracking all of its contributions to this outcome. Moreover, MTE concluded that there was a need to better distinguish between accomplishments of the country offices versus the contribution of the regional programme. The constant demand for DRR Unit products and services shows that it is having good results. Support from the DRR Unit sometimes comes by simple means such as facilitating telephone discussions between concerned parties, or passing along contact information. The opposite extreme is providing support to complex long-term interventions such as recovery from the earthquake in Haiti.

With a limited budget and staff, accomplishments are notable. However, increasing demands on the DRR Unit indicate that UNDP may need to reconsider how the DRR Unit is resourced and presented to the region.

SUSTAINABILITY

Work in the area of facilitating institutional changes and policies on DRR matters are viewed favourably from the standpoint of sustainability. The more the region is orientated towards promoting effective preventative measures, the greater the sustainability.

Some of the accomplishments during this programme period appear to be in jeopardy as there are a number of pipeline projects developed by countries that cannot find funding. There are also a critical amount of current projects that have not found funding for a subsequent phase. Some country offices are reducing their DRR staff, or applying creative thinking to save positions.

Overall, a model of a small and under-resourced unit expected to assist a large numbers of countries with diverse contexts and challenges in DRR is not sustainable. A stronger integration of DRR into efforts to achieve other UNDP priorities such as poverty reduction and adaptation to climate change may improve this situation. Governments such as Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay have demonstrated willingness to fund DRR activity and this is a positive indication of sustainability, but ultimately the operational model remains problematic.

UNDP has successfully demonstrated that there is a role for RSC in the DRR field, but this should be better defined. The DRR's services should be clearer and better promoted across the region. At the same time the mandate of the DRR Unit has not evolved strongly enough to recognize the connection between DRR and climate change and how this may provide one of the best opportunities over the next five to ten years to mobilize resources and innovate through new practices. The DRR Unit needs a stronger marketing strategy to capture and explain the evolving nature of its mandate. This can be achieved through simple measures such as a strong Internet presence that details the various products and services that the DRR Unit can provide and the new areas where expertise and experience are being developed.

Determining where to thematically situate DRR presents a challenge. To consider DRR as purely being a part of the environmental field obscures the social and economic implications associated with disasters but at the same time the DRR Unit is not properly positioned to move between its current association with BCPR and a more pronounced connection to the concepts of the environment and climate. As long as there is a regional programme, it will be expected to assist countries in recovering from extreme events.

¹⁴⁷ ECHO was set up in 1992 to provide rapid and effective support to the victims of crises outside the European Union. Recognizing the importance of pre-emptive measures, ECHO launched its disaster preparedness programme, DIPECHO, in 1996 that targets vulnerable communities living in the main disaster-prone regions of the world. The focus of DIPECHO is to demonstrate that simple and inexpensive preparatory measures, particularly those implemented by communities themselves, can be effective in limiting damage and saving lives when disaster strikes.

Such unfortunate circumstances will continue to occur, and there will be countries such as Haiti, Cuba and Jamaica where seismic risk reduction will remain a high priority. At the same time, in an era where climate change has an enormous influence over how problems are viewed, solutions defined and financial resources dedicated, the regional programme must move proactively into the field as it relates to DRR.

Promoting gender-sensitive recovery and prevention efforts appears to be a natural fit. Seismic risk is another area where certain country offices would like to see the DRR Unit take on greater leadership. This can occur while other approaches to disaster prevention that provide opportunities for learning, capacity strengthening and building new forms of partnerships that are of interest to the region are scoped out. There are concepts such as climate change infrastructure that would be a good fit for both the DRR and the environment and energy thematic teams and could present an opportunity to learn and develop expertise of interest to the region.

There are opportunities to promote innovative DRR practices within the private sector, trade associations such as tourism boards, communities and governments at all levels. The days when a multisectoral approach to climate change was limited to partnering with a meteorological service have long since passed. Economic diversification as a climate risk management strategy presents an opportunity to connect to the field of poverty reduction. The fact that DRR focal points in the country offices have an array of backgrounds is conducive to facilitate entry into new areas where staff have expertise and networks. Financial support may be as readily available through country-level sources as international funds.

3.4 ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Strategic ecosystems and biodiversity protected through the implementation of valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies. (Outcome 37)

RELEVANCE

The regional programme's contributions towards this outcome were relevant but there is still a long way before the outcome is achieved. Biodiversity activities are aligned with UNDP environment policy in the LAC region and directly address the widespread challenges there. They relate to threats to specific aspects of the LAC region's biodiversity, weaknesses in the capacity to protect and manage it and, of direct relation to the regional programme, lack of understanding regarding the economic potential of the region's biodiversity.

The regional programme's biodiversity activities were found to be filling an important role in terms of helping countries towards changing customs and circumstances where more significant inroads can be made.

EFFECTIVENESS

The contribution of the regional programme to outcome 37 has been effective in creating better circumstances to establish the basis for improved policies, practices and attitudes that will eventually lead to more direct outputs and outcomes. Concepts that the regional programme sought to promote such as Biodiversity Valuation and Protected Area Financing met with success in terms of producing critical publications, encouraging dialogue and establishing a common comprehension of important concepts.¹⁴⁸ Outcome 37 deals with complicated

¹⁴⁸ Biodiversity valuation involves recognizing the characteristics of biodiversity to provide services and looks to set priorities for programmes, policies, or actions that also protect or restore biodiversity and its ability to provide benefits. Protected area financing is a tool that examines a protected area funding requirements and looks to identify appropriate revenue sources over the short and long term to cover the full costs of protected areas and to cover the cost of proper management for protected areas. Habitat Banking is an economic strategy that funds conservation activity that compensates for development activity that results in the destruction of habitat.

variables such as a broader range of stakeholders that have to be engaged in processes to ensure positive results.

The publications are ‘The Importance of Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Economic Growth’ and ‘Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Economic Valuation of Ecosystems, Financial Sustainability of Protected Areas in Latin America and the Caribbean: Investment Policy Guidance’ and ‘Habitat Banking in Latin America and the Caribbean’. All have proven to be highly valuable. For example, the process to develop the publication ‘Protected Area Financing’ involved conducting capacity-building activity in 18 countries that helped to develop understanding and consensus on the process to move forward. The Protected Area Finance scorecard allows countries to evaluate the relative investment and costs of protected areas and provides the means to improve funding gaps have proven their worth. It is estimated that close to 25 countries have made use of the scorecard. The publications contributed to UNDP’s Global Policy on Biodiversity and IADB’s Platform on Biodiversity and helped with UNDP’s own Biodiversity Strategy in 2012.¹⁴⁹ In addition, the biodiversity valuation report was presented at the Conference of the Parties for the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, COP 10, held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, and an effective communication campaign strengthened its impact.

The regional programme is credited by the country offices with very successfully assisting countries in developing submissions to GEF in the area of biodiversity. In Argentina, the regional programme played a role in establishing the groundwork that led to the GEF project National Biodiversity Planning to Support the Implementation of the CBD 2011-2020 Strategic Plan in Argentina, which resulted in developing the country’s biodiversity strategy. There are also experiences in Paraguay and

Honduras. Funding has been secured through the Betty and John Moore Foundation facilitated by EEG to undertake national finance policy review processes in six priority countries (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru) to improve funding for protected areas. Some of the countries using the Protected Area scorecard as a basis for securing GEF funding include Honduras, Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Jamaica. Thirteen countries that participated in Protected Area Financing capacity-building activity have made submission to GEF for support to develop national strategies. RSC cannot confirm categorically that this is a result of the regional programme but as the lead international agency assisting in this area and having been active in the recent past, common sense suggests that this is the case. There are expectations that pilot activity in Habitat Banking will shortly be in place in Costa Rica and Peru. In Costa Rica, a project has been designed for GEF funding to conserve wetlands and is at the point of detailed design. In Peru, discussions with the Government have established an agreement to proceed with a more detailed country scoping assessment for Habitat Banking.

The UN programme Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) has been effective in establishing important stakeholder processes in Ecuador, Paraguay and Honduras. This programme is focused on supporting efforts to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, and by establishing incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.

The other tool looks at the relative value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to people and to the environment and attempts to quantify the difference between ‘businesses as usual’ and a scenario where the ecosystems are managed sustainably in order to influence policy and decision makers.

¹⁴⁹ <http://web.undp.org/latinamerica/biodiversity-superpower/English_Press.htm>

Outcome 37 deals with complicated variables such as the financial sustainability of protected areas that are highly complex from a financial, environmental, social and economic standpoint as well as the need to explain longer term impacts of valuing biodiversity to planning and finance ministers. In all this, the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders to ensure positive results has been fully met.

EFFICIENCY

The regional programme has efficiently applied financial and human resources to achieve results against outcome 37, with one caveat: there was no regional programme staff member assigned to biodiversity on a full-time basis. Staff members dedicating time to activities related to this outcome were in fact GEF UNDP staff based in RSC in Panama. Having this sort of in-house support was critical to producing the three publications. The major impact of this was that UNDP-GEF staff spent significant time to make this happen and led the process without charging for time. A biodiversity staff person could have helped if money had been available.

However, the lack of a dedicated staff member to promote their use and develop country-level activities eventually reduced the efficiency. The production of the publications required more resources than anticipated and this did not leave the necessary financial margin to hire a staff member to cover biodiversity. The mobilization of substantive additional resources for country office-level project activity is an area where strong efficiency was achieved.

SUSTAINABILITY

The three key publications act as references to establish long-term benchmarks and help guide stakeholders to more substantive processes, but at this time the contribution to sustainability is not clearly defined. The development of the publications entailed a considerable amount of capacity-building and awareness raising at strategic levels and this was critical from a

sustainability standpoint. The fact that the Protected Area scorecards have come to be used in a large number of countries is a positive indication of inroads towards sustainability. The fact that the scorecard is being used in different political settings and that countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia have established internal government capacity on the use of the scorecard, as opposed to relying on consultants, are good signs. Indications are that future country-level progress towards more sustainable mechanisms and structures will be possible on matters such as Habitat Banking but it is still early to make such a prognosis. In a more general way, it can also be said that broadening the range of stakeholders engaged in biodiversity-related processes as the regional programme has done through three strategy papers is a strong contribution to environmental mainstreaming and sustainability.

Strengthened regional capacities to adapt to climate change and increase the use of renewable energy sources. (Outcome 38)

RELEVANCE

The regional programme's contributions to this outcome are relevant as they address energy and climate change concerns that are shared across the region and aligned to the main strategies of UNDP. Establishing and increasing use of sustainable energy is a regional priority. The climate change and energy mandates of the regional programme are broad enough to ensure flexibility and this, combined with a strong record of delivery, has meant that there is a very high demand for the services and support provided by the regional programme.

The value of the services provided by the regional programme is seen in terms of ideas and technical expertise and not necessarily financial resources, directly, although resources were provided by means of GEF projects, in some cases. The regional programme has been successful in providing support to countries on energy and climate change related matters while positioning UNDP as a strategic partner in the region. This

has been achieved through three inter-related and complementary elements of UNDP capacity: The highly technical capabilities of the Panama EEG team of the regional programme working in tandem with the environment focal points in the country offices who then in turn support national governments. The country office level environmental focal points that for the most part also have strong technical expertise have been key to nurturing relationships with national partners and administering project activity. The third element relates to the staff people in Panama dedicated to providing technical support in mobilizing resources through GEF and other international environment funds.

Representatives from country offices, government officials and other development agencies feel that, through this layered approach, UNDP has become the lead international environmental agency in the LAC region. The combination of a technical hub set up to serve the region that is also able to mobilize large amounts of financial resources for project activity, complemented by a strong ground-level presence for on-site project implementation and monitoring is unmatched by other development agencies.

EFFECTIVENESS

With staff dedicated to climate change and energy-related programming, the regional programme presents strong evidence of effective results in this outcome. Carbon-reduction-related activity was developed through 'Carbon 2012' in seven countries aiming to increase the uptake of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in the region to geographically diversify the CDM's positive impacts on the MDGs, and to leverage increased investments in lower-carbon-intensity development. Over the last four years Costa Rica went from five registered CDM projects to eight; Cuba and Dominican Republic from one to two; El Salvador from five to six; Honduras from

14 to 22; Peru from 12 to 30; and Uruguay from three to eight.

The major contribution of the regional programme to outcome 38 is in supporting national processes to facilitate broad stakeholder engagement and contributing to the development of national policies and country-level best practices. Examples of this include the creation of the Climate Change Council in Dominican Republic, national policies for climate change developed and validated in Argentina, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic and the creation of a working group in Mexico to assist in the development of the national Climate Change Adaptation Policy. There has also been project activity at the subnational level such as the project with the Municipality of Bogotá, Colombia, to look at the implications of climate variability on the city. In Peru, funding was secured for the first Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action.

The environment and energy practice area also provided broad support to raise awareness about the linkages between planning and financing processes of the post-2012 climate regime to national policies. The intervention included stakeholder discussions, building consensus of climate change planning and governance, analysis of social impacts of climate change, and investment and financial flows, assessments for selected key sectors, establishment of policy and financing of solutions. The participants are 19 countries and technical teams, each with activities tailored to their particular demands and needs.

In the energy generation and end-use sector, low-emission sectoral strategies for transport and agriculture were developed and are under implementation in Costa Rica although concern was expressed that the agriculture study was too technical.¹⁵⁰ There are considerable concerns about subnational capacities in relation to climate change and energy practices and this priority is coming more clearly into focus.

¹⁵⁰ An additional important activity in Costa Rica is the development of a domestic voluntary carbon market.

There are already three subnational pilot climate change programmes in Peru, Uruguay and Columbia. Another new one is being supported by Switzerland and UNDP in Nicaragua.

There is broad consensus that the environment related activity of the regional programme has been inadequate in terms of responding to the needs of the English-speaking Caribbean with the vast majority of environment programming being implemented in Spanish-speaking countries. Spain provided USD 10 million for Hispanic countries and not for Anglophone countries, so the programme focused on Latin America.

Expectations in 2008 were that the regional programme would be very active in the environment in the Caribbean, but RSC explains that processes are difficult to complete in the Caribbean due to limited capacity and delays in implementation, but that was not the reason for disbursement to be focused in Latin America, it just happened as donor indicated where funds were to be used. In addition, colonial powers in the region (UK, USA, France and Netherlands) are no longer as actively supporting these territories reducing access to co-financing. Spain, the main donor for this outcome, focused its support on the Latin American region and does not have a history of financing projects in the Caribbean.

The various funds such as GEF do not make distinct rules for SIDS, even though it is far more difficult to develop and implement projects for these countries with small populations and fewer government staff. EEG tried to use Target for Resources Assigned from the Core (TRAC) funding for the Caribbean but needed additional donor funding. TRAC was cut from USD 1.2 million in 2008 to USD 440,000 in 2012¹⁵¹, allowing less flexibility.

There have been communication problems between the Caribbean and EEG about how GEF projects can and should be conceptualized. The

desire of the Caribbean to see well-rounded projects that address multiple development objectives conflicts with GEF's stringent rules requiring that projects focus on global environmental concerns. Additionally, the country office did not want RSC to get involved and wanted the practice area to rely on them to deliver projects. This led to delays that were blamed on RSC but reflect the unwillingness of country office staff to understand that different rules can be applied, as externalities, and have to be followed to achieve success.

Although stakeholders in the Caribbean do not question whether EEG at RSC wants to assist the Caribbean, they are challenged with the access to limited funds from traditional donors for this region to finance project activities. RSC has tried, with non-regional programme staff, to acquire funds from GEF and others and has got better results in last two years. More is being done than before but still more needs to be done, and that is true. Another concern is incentive structure for staff of the regional programme to develop projects for GEF. This situation feeds into a long-standing narrative regarding perceived regional programme neglect of the Caribbean and does not accurately capture the willingness of all stakeholders to identify and develop projects for the benefit of the Caribbean. An approach or arrangement is lacking in the regional programme to ensure that the Caribbean can be seen to benefit from the financial resources in the same way other countries have.

EFFICIENCY

On environmental matters, the regional programme has proven to be efficient in channelling resources and knowledge to country offices. As with biodiversity, part of the efficiency of the regional programme stems from its success in mobilizing resources through multi-donor trust funds. On average in the past two years, USD 75 million was raised for projects through RSC. The fund-raising model enables the regional

¹⁵¹ This amount includes both biodiversity and climate change outcomes.

programme resources to be deployed carefully in several different countries to align the regional programme with opportunities in the GEF portfolio across groups of countries.

The process of accessing financing through the trust funds on behalf of the country offices for implementation by national governments can be often challenging for country offices. A major problem with GEF projects is that UNDP country offices are not allowed to charge for the services of environment and energy specialists to the project budget. UNDP institutionally receives 10 percent of a GEF project budget for administrative purposes and 3.5 percent goes to the country office. However, RSC has no guarantees that the country office will invest this amount into the capacities of its environment section. This is increasingly an issue where LAC countries are considered high- and middle-income countries and are losing access to TRAC funding.

A number of country offices reported that there are other financing options available at the country level that cannot be pursued due to the lack of staff and/or seed money to develop projects. While some national governments reluctantly finance environmental capacity-building activities, many others are willing to do so, but are looking for technical assistance to start the process. Through the Carbon 2012 project the regional programme has financed a national position of carbon finance officer to manage the project activities in the seven participating countries (El Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Uruguay, Peru and Costa Rica). This has significantly strengthened the capacity of the country office in climate change-related programme. El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Peru have managed to retain this staff with their own funds, recognizing the added value they were providing to their portfolio.

There are also some concerns regarding the overall efficiency of the UN system in terms of the collective input of UNDP and UNEP when the images presented to national governments are of sometime collaborating and sometime competing agencies. There is effective cooperation between UNDP and UNEP on matters such as the Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI). In Peru, the two agencies worked together to establish and assure accreditation for the National Implementing Entity for the Adaptation Fund. There is also the example from Colombia of the development of the low-carbon strategy for the country to which both agencies contributed. In countries where UNEP has on-site project activity, they sometimes rely on UNDP country offices to provide support, as UNEP does not have country offices.¹⁵² However, there were examples that indicated that coordination between the two agencies is not always smooth.

UNEP and UNDP are often forced by the design of the funding available and the wish of donors for competitive processes for the various funds and in these occasions it is not easy to collaborate in these areas. However, when the basis is cooperation and funds are provided on that basis, then cooperation works better, e.g. PEI, UN REDD. The essential difference is not in the organizations but the behaviour of donors and their intentions.

The evaluation found that there is need and room to improve collaboration between the environment and energy practice area and other thematic teams in RSC. Issues such as comparability of charge-out rates and inter-practice MOUs were hindering more effective collaboration between EEG and the other teams. Attempts to cooperate with the poverty group were not successful and more dialogue is required to determine how best to enhance substantive cooperation. Having said this, there are a number of examples of effective partnership between EEG with the

¹⁵² Some stakeholders referred to the 'goodwill model' where UNEP depends on the goodwill of the UNDP country offices to facilitate country level activity. This approach depends on the individual relationships, workloads, and the inherent disposition of people from different agencies to embrace a collaborative process.

other thematic areas. Gender and climate change is an especially strong area of cooperation. In Paraguay, the environment and energy practice area of RSC assisted in the approval of a National Policy on Climate Change in December 2011 by the National Council of Environment, which includes gender as an explicit cross-cutting theme in order to ensure that both women and men benefit equally from climate-change adaptation policies in the country. Similarly, gender was considered a cross-cutting theme in the National Policy for Risk Management and Civil Protection. The gender practice area particularly through their work supporting UNDP Mexico country office together with the environment and energy practice area has contributed to the outcome of COP 16 as part of the efforts of outcome 38 further analysed ahead. The total number of references to gender in the final text of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) increased and there were qualitative differences compared to previous draft texts. A climate change and gender workshop was carried out for Latin American stakeholders facilitated by work of regional programme staff.

There has been successful cooperation between EEG and BCPR on activities in Central America supporting organizations such as CEPREDENAC and on the UN REDD project in Peru where a co-financing arrangement was established to make progress on promoting understanding on the negative impacts of corruption in the forestry sector. The two thematic areas have also been working on the issue of mining and conflict in indigenous communities in South

America. There have been discussions regarding further collaboration with the DRR Unit on the second phase of CRMI.

SUSTAINABILITY

Contributions to this outcome have been more sustainable when related to the establishment of internationally accepted environmental standards through climate legislation. The regional programme has supported countries to put in place policy structures to address the issue over the long term. National governments and public officials may change, but these policies will continue to act as guiding frameworks. Contributions to the establishment of processes in countries such as Dominican Republic, Argentina, Paraguay and Mexico were critical to mainstream climate change. Country-level policies and processes bring countries closer to being able to consider options such as self-financing.

Many of the countries no longer look to UNDP for funding but for information and technical guidance, and this is encouraging from a sustainability standpoint. Over the next five years, GEF and other international funds will still be available, allowing countries to further refine and develop their own processes, policies and practices. After that time, countries in LAC should be better positioned to minimize their dependence on external financing and technical assistance. Additionally, capacity-building activities that supported policy and legislative processes have established in-country capabilities that will serve further purposes in relation to improving climate and energy practices.

CHAPTER 4.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP IN THE REGION

Chapter 4 presents the analysis and main findings related to the contributions to development more directly linked to the cross-cutting areas addressed in the regional programme: gender equality and mainstreaming, knowledge management, capacity development and South-South solutions and M&E. HIV/AIDS is also considered by the regional programme as a cross-cutting area but has been covered as focus of two outcomes in Chapter 3. M&E is not officially a cross-cutting area, but, by its nature, does support and generate contributions to development in a cross-cutting way, and therefore will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter also summarizes the main findings related to the overall strategic role and positioning of the UNDP regional programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as its coordination and harmonization within the UN system.

4.1 CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

GENDER EQUALITY AND MAINSTREAMING

After being practically non-existent in RCF II, gender equality became an important component of the regional programme in the period 2008-2012. The evaluation found gender-specific interventions in all thematic areas despite the fact that the regional programme, as formulated, did not specifically plan to address gender priorities of the region set by the Quito Consensus in August 2007, or align itself with the priorities set in UNDP Gender Strategy 2008-2011.

Internal UNDP accountability has been strengthened with relevant inputs from the

regional gender practice area that supported the implementation of institutional mechanisms in the region to monitor gender mainstreaming, such as the gender marker working with the country office gender focal points. This instrument is credited with being a good first step towards making visible how/if programmes have incorporated a gender approach. However, it is still seen as an insufficient mechanism when providing meaningful information on how effectively gender is being mainstreamed.

Also significant is the process of the Gender Seal that inspired the UNDP Equality Seal, a voluntary certification of gender mainstreaming in UNDP country offices that is to be implemented worldwide and that has been successfully piloted already in Argentina. Gender mainstreaming was also incorporated in UNDAF processes in the region, most noticeably in Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua, with RSC being credited with having had a significant contribution to these processes. Cuba was cited often as a good example of how the regional gender practice area has been particularly relevant when including an in-depth gender perspective within its UNDAF. Also noteworthy is the establishment of a strong gender equality community of practice.

Internal and external gender capacities have been strengthened through the work of the regional gender team, most significantly serving as a constant reference for all gender focal points in the region. It is noteworthy that the evaluation found a strong correlation between those countries where the regional programme has achieved significant results in the area of gender and those country offices with specialized and/

or committed gender focal points. This indicates how important it is to have focal points with sufficient expertise and legitimacy that can advise on how to operationalize gender mainstreaming, and can make full use of the resources made available.

Despite these achievements, the evaluation found scattered results for gender mainstreaming: there is no common understanding of what should be the extent of gender mainstreaming, or clarity where accountability for implementing gender mainstreaming lies. This leads to regional thematic areas relying on the regional gender practice area to tackle gender issues (with the exception of the area of HIV/AIDS) and therefore a lack of awareness of gender mainstreaming as a collective organizational responsibility.

Although there is a strong commitment and intention on the part of senior management at RSC and the practice area leaders, a proactive strategy for gender mainstreaming with dedicated financial resources is still lacking within the regional programme.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

In the past programme – RCF II – knowledge management was informal, inconsistent and practically non-existent. The current programme made progress and took a step towards the aim of UNDP becoming a ‘learning organization’ and having knowledge management as a conceptual integrator of the whole regional programme and the advisory services provided to the country offices. The regional programme was designed to be anchored in the practice areas while supplying the advisory and programming support demanded. In turn, the regional programme was expected to leverage from a variety of resources provided by the areas having knowledge management as a key integrator. The knowledge-management approach aimed to enhance the advisory capacities through the development of conceptual frameworks in key areas, systematization and dissemination of the region’s experiences and best practices; the development of tools for policy advice, programme

support and capacity development. To do so, the knowledge-management approach is to promote cross-practice synergies and support; build on the expertise and contributions of a network of associate experts; and build on the extensive regional experience and exchanges through their active communities of practice.

The regional programme today is more strategically positioned to support the regional implementation of the knowledge-management strategy as a conceptual integrator, beyond the global Teamworks online platform initiative, and further facilitate systematization, exchange, adaptation and transfer of practical knowledge on development issues. The strategy to have knowledge management as a conceptual integrator positions particularly well the regional programme to support South-South cooperation and promote the production and dissemination of knowledge in the region. However, integration is still fragmented and the approach has not been cohesively applied yet. This conceptual integrator approach is still not clear; nor is it clear how each of the cross-cutting areas’ roles are in tying together and coordinating support more efficiently and effectively as added values to the practice areas.

The knowledge-management contributions were linked to UNDP regional thematic practice areas, other UN agencies, national institutions and other development groups in LAC in providing technical support and advice to design, implement, systematize and disseminate experiences and initiatives. KMU and other areas have a menu of knowledge products, events, activities and procedures that can be tailored to the needs of country offices and other partners.

The regional programme has not systematically measured the contribution of knowledge management to development outcomes, but a number of initiatives have been monitored, as well as to a certain extent the use, quality, reach and influence of its services and products. Over the period evaluated there have been 387 knowledge products developed, including: 29 methodological

guidelines, 57 systematizations and good practices documents, 59 training workshops and courses, 22 toolkits, 36 research documents, 14 evaluations, 25 communities of practice and more than 145 communication products. One indicator of progress is the success of the supported initiatives of the inter-agency knowledge fair on 'UN Effectiveness in Knowledge Sharing' held in Turin November 2010. During the fair two initiatives of the regional programme and three initiatives supported by RSC were presented as good practices in knowledge-sharing at the global UN level.

That said, the regional programme does not include a plan to strategically promote and integrate learning to better inform decision-making, linking planning, monitoring and evaluation and learning processes through knowledge management. One of UNDP's most appreciated assets is its access to different country-level experiences. KMU has the tools and capacity for this, but much of this potential is underutilized due to the lack of resources and the need for a more strategic and integrated knowledge management process. In some areas, such as CPR and gender, knowledge transfer already provides an added value. This would allow more efficient and effective use of limited resources.

The regional programme has lacked strategic edge by not sufficiently mapping knowledge to identify the offer and demand for development knowledge in the region. Often knowledge products are developed without a clear dissemination plan or idea of who will use it, how and to what end, and, where such strategies are in place, they are ad hoc and on-demand. KMU does not necessarily have any control over this; different thematic areas decide on the products, often without thorough analysis or plan for its use.

The regional programme included knowledge management in each area but it has not yet reached a point where knowledge management considerations are systematically incorporated into project design from the onset. The regional programme also lacks a simple but powerful

knowledge tool such as a best practices bank with a friendly search engine.

Below is an analysis of LAC knowledge platforms and products developed using cybermetric research methods to reveal larger online trends such as the types of organizations citing documents, their geographic distribution, how they are referencing publications or websites, and various other aspects.

About the knowledge platforms: The cybermetric analysis found that 12 of the 19 knowledge platforms had sufficient references to be evaluated, and of these the five most-referred from external sources were: UNDP Virtual School, UNDP Regional Service Centre, America Latina Genera, Latin America Human Development Journal (*Revista Humanum*) and Teamworks. These references come mainly from United Nations agencies, followed by CSOs, bloggers and other social media actors. Regional programme knowledge platforms are primarily considered as resources and are commonly referenced within listings, articles or news stories, and blogs. These knowledge products are often featured in organizational information, blogs, newsletters, social media discussions, and as best practices.

Knowledge products: Of 58 knowledge products assessed, 35 qualified for full analysis. One analysis looked at references to publications on different themes. This found that most external references (31) were for the three publications on crisis prevention and citizen security, followed by gender equality and mainstreaming (24), HIV/AIDS (17); human development, poverty, social inclusion, and MDG achievement publications (17); energy, environment and disaster risk (12); and democratic governance publications (five). Around a fifth of these references to LAC knowledge products came from UN agencies, with others from global development web portals and regional academic institutions. Knowledge products are most commonly referenced as resources, often in online listings, articles and within abstracts and summaries, and as academic citations within formal reports. The majority of

references to UNDP knowledge products come from external organizations and from countries in the LAC region, which suggests that products are used beyond the UN system.

Teamworks and communities of practice: Using metrics from Google Analytics, data was used to assess Teamworks and 10 of its communities of practice from 1 January 2011 to 30 September 2012. Further, 29 randomly sampled websites were used to assess online sources that reference Teamworks. The majority of visits are from the United States, in particular New York City. The majority of referencing organizations are from the United Nations, CSOs and actors using social media, commonly referring to articles, blog posts, and cited in organizational information. CoPs with higher levels of members and engagement on Teamworks are: CoP on evaluation; conflict prevention and citizen security; MDGs; and knowledge management. It should be noted though that Teamworks has not been given great reviews globally as a knowledge-management tool and has not proven an effective companion of CoPs, other than as a repository of documents and presentations.

Annex 5 (available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>) contains detailed data and assessments on the cybermetric analysis as well as a snapshot on network relations among and within LAC UNDP knowledge platforms. Outcome 30 also contains reflections and analyses related to the *integration, generation and use of knowledge*, which are integral parts of the formulation of this outcome.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The work of the Regional Capacity Development Unit has contributed to strategically position

UNDP by identifying institutional weaknesses and developing capacities of country offices, targeted stakeholders and key institutions.¹⁵³ The relevant contributions made towards capacity development have proven to be efficient given the amount of work done with the limited resources.

Further clarification of the role and specific goals of capacity development could help achieve a more effective delivery of assistance in a more collaborative work with substantive practice areas. The regional programme has been more effective in starting up, promoting and implementing capacity assessments, capacity development strategies, and costing capacity development; particularly in Honduras, Jamaica, El Salvador, Belize, Peru, Venezuela, among other countries. Training services were provided for better understanding capacity development and capacities were transferred to public institutions and country offices to enable them to perform capacity development on their own in Nicaragua and Guyana. In addition, an inter-cluster and inter-agency assessment and a capacity development process was conducted and systematized in the area of disaster risk reduction for Uruguay's National Emergency System. The demand for support from the Regional Capacity Development Unit has consistently increased over the last years and capacity development, as strategically approached by the regional unit, is better mainstreamed in key corporate planning and programming documents in the region.

The work of the Capacity Development Unit aimed at strengthening functional capacities and systems for better service delivery in Jamaica, El Salvador, Belize, Peru, and Haiti, among other countries in LAC. Capacity assessment and development processes were carried out and capacity development responses designed and initiated in several national institutions. The

¹⁵³ Works developed with the regional Government of Puno and Regional Government of Cusco, both in Peru; the Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development in Belize; National Funds - People's National Housing Fund in El Salvador; Local Government Structures - Jamaica's Parish System; National Environmental Programmes - the National Parks Institute in Venezuela; and Health-Related Institutions - the National HIV-AIDS Commission in Nicaragua; and the Salvadorian Institute for Teachers' Welfare.

Corporate Capacity Assessment Methodology has been adapted to areas such as water and sanitation, governance, local governance, preservation of protected areas, human rights, HIV-AIDS, health and housing. The Regional Capacity Development Unit led these initiatives in partnership with country offices and local partners. In the adaptation of the corporate methodology to the LAC context, efforts have been made to make the capacity development process a more participatory approach, aiming at increasing ownership for the implementation of the response, thus helping to make these interventions sustainable. Since this unit was created in 2009, these initiatives are too recent to allow any conclusive assessment of the sustained effectiveness of these processes or the contribution they continued to provide to development. Some indications of results begin to surface in the behavioural change of targeted institutions as they begin to improve coordination mechanisms.

Collaboration with thematic practice areas has been significant, but at times it has been hampered by the fact that the small practice area works with a cost-recovery business model, while thematic practice areas mostly work with activities funded through projects. This creates a situation of imbalance in terms of the amount of resources that country offices need to be able to access expertise from each team.

In certain cases, it is possible to use project resources to pay for the work of the capacity development practice area. In other cases, such as environment, there are restrictions by other funding agencies (e.g. GEF) to hiring UNDP staff. Therefore, even though needs may exist; these projects cannot pay for resources from other practice areas. In any case, collaboration or lack thereof seems to be driven by the existence of resources to pay for the services of the capacity development practice area, rather than the efficiencies or effectiveness that they provide.

Progress has been made towards national capacity development, though not necessarily using the most recent capacity assessment/

capacity development corporate methodology. This progress has been made at different pace and intensities, through a series of courses, workshops, publications and longer term technical assistance provided through ongoing projects in a variety of countries. In many cases, such as in the CES experience in El Salvador, capacities are built at the level of the country offices, which then can replicate the knowledge gained at the local government and stakeholders' levels.

The regional programme has also made an important contribution towards capacity development in the region through the Virtual School, which builds on UNDP experiences, messages and knowledge and turns them into learning processes. The decision in 2008 to steer the school's activities towards working with UNDP country offices and regional projects was instrumental in aligning the school with the capacity development needs of the regional programme. In 2010, the school was selected by an inter-agency panel led by the UN Development Operations Coordination Office and the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) as one of the seven best knowledge sharing practices of the UN and in 2011; it was awarded UNDP's *Compartir Conocimiento para el Desarrollo* award.

Although capacity development is not appropriately measured, four factors are known to make the Virtual School a good means to contribute to capacity development in the region: 1) it has wide academic coverage across the themes of human development, democratic governance and crisis prevention and recovery; 2) it uses a wide variety of delivery mechanisms, e.g. virtual courses or forums, face-to-face teaching, self-taught courses, etc.; 3) it reaches remote areas and a large number of individuals, increasing the chances of generating multiplier effects; and 4) a large portion of participants are practitioners, i.e. UNDP officials, government representatives at national, subnational and local levels or members of civil society organizations throughout the region, which increases the chances that the knowledge conveyed through the courses may be applied in development practice. Participants fill

in a satisfaction questionnaire after the courses but knowledge retention and application is not measured by the school or the regional projects that host the courses. The present evaluation found only anecdotal positive and negative evidence of retention and application of the knowledge.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation. It has created an enabling environment for this through the promotion of specific networks; through projects and dialogue spaces; in courses provided by UNDP School of Human Development; and with knowledge fairs and other tools for promoting the exchange of experiences to create linkages across countries and geographic areas. Each practice area has also developed tools and strategies to promote South-South cooperation, or at minimum, the learning and exchange of practices and lessons.

Various projects and services provided by the regional programme, across thematic areas, enabled the cross-fertilization of ideas and sharing of experiences across multiple countries. In some cases, such as in SIGOB and Gender Seal, the project facilitated technical exchange on public management systems and processes among its system users, supporting knowledge sharing among institutions of the same country and across countries. In other cases, such as in the CPR area, sustained processes of South-South cooperation and support were in place for follow up. For example, El Salvador country office was able to provide capacity transfer and training to the Honduras country office. Country office focal points also have space for horizontal cooperation through CoPs. Other experiences were facilitating exchanges and seminars to share information across participating countries and these, perhaps due to limited resources, resulted in isolated activities and did not allow for continuity and the development of autonomous potential for South-South relationships.

South-South cooperation was also facilitated by the regional programme through

organized training courses and organized site visits. For example, the Programme of High-Level Diplomatic Courses was conceived as a region-wide training series for senior diplomats from Latin America and the Caribbean on current development and international aid issues. South-South direct exchanges or organized site visits also took place, such as those relating Latin American and Arab States on democratic transition in support of the Arab Spring. These exchanges enabled Egyptian and Tunisian public officials and entrepreneurs to observe local interventions in Brazil, Chile and Mexico and learn about these experiences of transition to democracy. Follow-up initiatives took place with a PAPEP pilot case implementation in Tunisia (2011) and transfer of methodologies and capacity development in Egypt (2012) report. The regional programme also initiated exchanges with Africa in close coordination with country offices in Latin America. Results of these activities are more limited in some cases than in others. And in some cases, even when tailor-made agendas were in place, they have not yet been sufficiently effective in developing sustained individual capacities or the development of joint solutions. Also, the democratic governance practice area sponsored South-South exchanges with Macedonia on topics related to local governance and decentralization through its PROLOGO and TRAALOG initiatives.

Although a SSC corporate strategy is not in place, there has been regional exchange of solutions, prepared and executed by the Government of Panama with support from the regional programme. The fair in Panama, which brought together around 300 participants from over 24 countries from and outside the region, aimed at contributing to the understanding of South-South cooperation as a mechanism to advancing the sustainable and social human development agenda in the countries of the region. The dialogue held was reflected on the intentions of cooperation established among the participating countries and there are several examples of processes that were generated from the exchanges facilitated by the fair, results cannot yet be evaluated for effectiveness or sustainability.

The results from the fair's evaluation survey show that opportunities for exchange and establishment of agreements were rated highest among all other spaces offered by the fair; likewise over 80 percent of its participants considered pertinent to carry out a fair of this nature again. In this sense, given the high importance attached by participating directors of international cooperation agencies from the region to this kind of knowledge exchange meetings, they requested UNDP to convene the fair biannually.

Over the past five years, the Regional Capacity Development Unit has made efforts towards improving capacities for SSC through the creation of tools, and by mapping UNDP country office support and multilateral support to South-South cooperation activities in the region. To date, UNDP country office support for SSC has been mapped for initiatives carried out in 2009, 2010 and 2011; the mapping of those conducted in 2012 is being updated. The regional programme also hosted a UNDP meeting of directors of country-level international cooperation agencies from the region (May 2012) whose main outcome was the agreement on the establishment of a Permanent Dialogue Forum to strengthen existing cooperation channels and to promote SSC and other cooperation mechanisms as well as knowledge-sharing across key priority areas. In addition, the Capacity Development and Knowledge Management Units organized the first regional South-South cooperation fair, Knowledge from the South, in May 2012.

Additionally, RSC has developed and applied with success a methodology for the design and implementation of knowledge fairs in a number of previous initiatives in the region, namely the knowledge fairs 'Compromiso Centroamerica' (2010) and 'Mujeres Parlamentarias' (2009). RBAS has recently requested technical support for the design and organization of their First Arab States Regional South-South Development Expo scheduled for May-June 2013. The regional programme has an important role in fostering South-South cooperation, for which there is a tangible untapped demand. South-South cooperation is a topic of interest to most UNDP

country offices and countries in LAC, which perceive these to be opportunities to showcase their successful experiences and learn from others. In particular, more intra-regional South-South cooperation is desired.

However, the intra-bureau ties on South-South cooperation issues that are being developed and reinforced between the LAC region and others are to be better communicated and acknowledged. To mention a recent development in this regard, RSCLAC/RBLAC has cooperated with RBAP to facilitate and support the initiation of South-South cooperation exchanges between the Colombian International Cooperation Agency and Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam, in the areas of climate change, DRR, systems of social protection, among others. To date, several specific exchange actions in the established priority areas have been advanced between Colombia and the three Asian governments and further exchanges aimed at defining wider cooperation actions are under way.

RSC is a good space to facilitate the engagement of country offices and countries in these activities, but support is needed to move beyond systematizing practices and sharing information and capacities towards a more proactive approach to facilitating South-South solutions, transfer of knowledge and learning. This would be important to ensure that instead of one-off exchanges, a process of knowledge transfer is developed with specific goals and steps designed to enhance the continuous gain of in-depth knowledge. It may including be possible to build on existing country offices' capacities to undertake this kind work. Certain countries have capacities to engage in South-South cooperation, but need a structure (such as the regional programme) to channel resources.

The Caribbean does not seem to be well included in South-South initiatives by the regional programme. Partners in the Caribbean feel that the region is mostly seen as a receiver of aid, but it is time for UNDP and other regions to see the Caribbean as a potential knowledge provider.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The evaluation area has made progress in supporting programme design and the integration of improved M&E mechanisms for the regional programme, UNDAFs, country programmes and projects. A significant amount of work was put into sensitizing regional programme staff on the importance of tracking contributions to outcome-level results. The capacity built in country offices with the support of the evaluation area has also contributed to results-based management at the country level. The evaluation area has supported 100 percent of the country offices in the region and capacity development has also reached increasingly regional and national partners. In addition to the UN-level regional work, the evaluation area has facilitated one of the most active regional UNDP CoPs. The evaluation area has also established an inter-agency regional work group on evaluation and has re-activated the regional UN network on evaluation (EVALUNLAC). In this framework, the evaluation area has developed practical guidance on many key steps in the evaluation processes.

Despite considerable progress, the current RPD still needs work to improve RBM of the regional programme. Responding to a recommendation from the evaluation of the last programme, the evaluation area was established in January 2010 to better incorporate RBM. Initial efforts resulted in a more coherent and comprehensive plan for the regional programme with improved indicators, baselines and targets. Another indication of progress towards improved results-oriented monitoring practices was the establishment of regional thematic boards for the practice areas on annual basis. These boards involve key internal and external regional partners, and have contributed to the buy-in of the regional programme among different partners and improved focus on results.

However, there are still no sufficiently clear theories of change for the regional programme outcomes, meaning that for the feasibility of outputs to concretely contribute to the outcomes,

given the amount of resources available, is not clear. Particularly, the differences between subregions are not properly addressed and indicators do not sufficiently allow measurement of the specific added value of the regional programme and how it differentiates from contributions made by programmes at other levels. Provided the format of the results framework of future programmes is not improved, outcome-level evaluations will face challenges in measuring more rigorously the comparative advantages of a regional programme to justify its further existence.

The timing of evaluations of the regional programme outcomes is not strategic enough yet to feed into decision-making and contribute to regional and corporate analysis. The regional programme evaluation plan covers all thematic areas, but the timing of the delivery of the evaluations reports has not always considered that the Executive Board will continue to request independent evaluations at the end of the cycle to feed into the new RPD. Ideally, all outcomes should have been evaluated at mid-cycle to, to feed into meta-analysis of a final regional programme evaluation. A mid-term evaluation makes sense if there was no time to have separate outcome evaluations by mid-cycle. It is not cost-efficient to have all outcomes evaluated, then a mid-term evaluation, this promotes an evaluation fatigue. Since it is clear that the Executive Board will require the Evaluation Office of UNDP to conduct a final evaluation of the regional programme incorporating all outcomes, there is no need to have all outcomes evaluated and a mid-term evaluation.

Like other areas, the evaluation area has a roster and a network of associate experts that proved to be helpful to country offices, although the independence of some consultants is questionable. It is still possible to find consultants from the evaluation roster in other thematic rosters of RSC. Consultants in other thematic RSC pools have a clear conflict of interest when working as evaluators for the same programme they expect to be hired as a thematic consultant.

There is still not an efficient tracking system in place on how different regional programme products are being used and how they have influenced decision-making, learning and development. The evaluation area publishes evaluation reports in ERC¹⁵⁴ and disseminates results in the community of practice bulletin but the same monitoring can be organized with KMU to track the use of other products not necessarily linked to evaluations. Most outside informants communicated not knowing enough about the knowledge products and use of evaluation learning. For the evaluation, a clear tracking should also be kept in how the results of the evaluation have helped improve learning and decision-making. Important ground work has been done with the conceptual document on knowledge management plans developed in 2012 setting the basis for a results-oriented integrated approach. The RSC evaluation area, in alignment with KMU, has the potential to further support the strategic positioning of UNDP in the region as it continues to support RBM and knowledge management to promote learning, knowledge management and accountability.

4.2 STRATEGIC POSITIONING

VALUE ADDED AND COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

The Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean's contribution to development has been relevant to strategically position UNDP in the region. The regional programme has been recognized by some stakeholders as leading agency in the areas of gender equality, climate change and citizen security, and has strongly improved in the recognition of promoting and implementing the concept of disaster risk reduction. The Evaluation Office survey revealed, however, that this is at odds with the perception

of 34 percent of the country offices, when asked whether the regional programme has been able to focus on issues of relevance for their country government, it as can be seen in Annex 5¹⁵⁵ (available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation-admin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>).

The regional programme, and particularly the communities of practice and their periodic meetings, have had an important effect in terms of conveying, tightening up and maintaining UNDP's corporative spirit among country offices in the region, therefore, contributing to the strategic positioning of the regional programme and UNDP in the region. This is not to be underestimated in a context where most countries are middle income and country office's work is often related to providing direct technical assistance and support to governments' demands, a situation in which the corporate spirit may easily be diluted.

The regional programme has contributed to positioning UNDP not only in the governmental and public arena but among media, academia and civil society as a dynamic actor and a point of reference in the human development debate in the region. In this regard, the regional programme has filled an important niche in terms of orienting the human development agenda towards LAC region's key challenges (inequality, security, youth development). UNDP's knowledge products are highly valued as a strategic advantage in this regard: they are based on robust research yet emphasize the qualitative part of subjective dimensions and complexities of the wide array of aspects associated with human development. That said, the fact that academic research has not translated into evidence-based problem solving instruments for country offices, partner governments and civil society has meant

¹⁵⁴ UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre.

¹⁵⁵ Cross-analysing past surveys of RSC it was possible to see that the results of surveys change significantly depending on who responds. When Resident Representatives respond they tend to be more negative than when thematic advisers (programme officers) respond. Therefore, the EO survey was carefully used only as one leg for triangulation.

lost ground in terms of strategic positioning, as UNDP comparative advantage and business model goes beyond generating research and contributing to debates.

The regional programme has made progress towards the expected outcomes with effective contributions from all practice areas contributing to the strategic positioning of UNDP in the region. The cross-cutting areas have contributed to the work of different practice areas while also furthering their own specific objectives. The previous chapter highlights the most effective contributions to strategic positioning of UNDP across the different outcomes.

Contributions in knowledge management included providing information on demand and producing conceptual frameworks and advocacy reports on critical issues with the potential to inform debates and influence policies, and creating strong platforms for multistakeholder knowledge sharing.

Contributions in capacity development and technical assistance included adaptable methodologies for capacity assessment and development, public sector training and in particular the strengthening of capacity of partners to foster inclusion of vulnerable groups. The agency was also able to contribute to leadership and capacity strengthening of key regional institutions such as SICA, OECS and CARICOM.

In relation to advocacy, UNDP's reputation and perceived neutrality enabled it to effectively raise sensitive issues in some areas, and promote greater inclusion in policy decisions. UNDP was also able to leverage additional funding for development and environment in Latin America, but to a lesser extent in the Caribbean.

UNDP's regionalization process that created RSC also contributed to the effectiveness of the regional programme through the new structure of practice area teams, with expertise in different programming areas. Commitment to coordination by different UNDP departments, such as

BDP and BCPR, have improved effectiveness as the practice area heads are substantive advisers better able to more effectively contribute technical expertise.

The regional programme strived to find the right balance between support to country offices and management of regional or multi-country initiatives. The regionalization aspect of many interventions is not clear, and most are perceived as multi-country activities without an underlying regional strategy. Some of the challenges that persist are related with the clarification of roles, cost-recovery strategies to allow synergies among practice areas, the degree of participation of country offices in the regional project cycle, information flows, access to funds and transparency of responses to demands.

The regional programme's contributions to results are more sustainable when able to influence policies and ensure knowledge transfer. In some cases, the regional programme was able to develop locally owned spaces for dialogue and participatory processes to promote national and regional ownership. This creates a higher probability of positive behaviour change and sustainable results, though these are currently too recent to judge with confidence. The increase of the graduation threshold from gross national income of USD 6,550 to USD 12,450 for MICs will give more time for initiatives to gain maturity and strengthen their chances for sustainability.

It was found that regional and multi-country initiatives do not systematically address sustainability factors in their design and implementation. The design of the regional programme does consider the sustainability of results and not many project designs include clearly articulated exit strategies. However, some very solid initiatives still proved to be appropriately implemented to guarantee sustainable contributions based on different success factors mentioned in Chapter 3.

Sustainability was often constrained by the lack of contingency strategies from the outset, so that interventions could deal with readily anticipated

challenges. Some of these challenges include: limited funding windows for continuity; reduction of financial resources; lack of sustained political will; limited local ownership and institutionalization of engagements; lack of risk mitigation and exit strategies; externalities (disasters); rotation of staff and governments where interventions have not been institutionalized and/or are perceived as owned by a particular political administration; and, to a lesser extent, dependency on impartial funds to keep neutrality.

The regional programme's strategic positioning depends on how UNDP results demonstrate its added value and thus enable justification of the additional (regional) layer of programming. Many governments are not clear about whether UNDP is ready to provide the support to meet the evolving needs of the region. Taking into consideration the challenges and particular vulnerabilities of MICs, UNDP lacks a clearly articulated and communicated strategy to respond to evolving needs while more efficiently using limited available resources. Limited resources will continue to be a challenge for the regional programme to find innovative ways to help countries sustain and advance their internal progress, and help them fulfil their aspirations to be players on the global stage. UNDP has been discussing how to work more strategically with MICs, as shown in the numerous documents with recommendations in this regard.¹⁵⁶ However, UNDP has not yet sufficiently involved these countries and UNDP country offices in these discussions.

The promotion of strategic partnerships is another added value UNDP brings. Partnerships played a major role in positioning UNDP in the region. UNDP has long experience of cooperation and partnership with Latin America and Caribbean states. Governments commit their own financial resources to UNDP cooperation, whether in the

form of budgetary contributions or loans from international financial organizations.

Partnerships have been at times based on personal informal relationships rather than on formal institutional frameworks creating different problems. For instance, there has been contact between RSC, RBLAC and MDG-F but contacts did not follow a formal partnership fashion; as a consequence MDG-F is not familiarized with the regional programme and there has been no institutionalized strategic cooperation framework in a context where there were several opportunities for collaboration: links between MGD-F projects and MDG reports, exploring possibilities for data sharing (UNDP country offices using the vast array of baseline data generated by MDG-F projects) and even joint evaluations.

THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME IN THE CARIBBEAN

The regional programme did not play a strategic role in the Caribbean. Due to their unique needs and the lack of a clear strategy and framework for cooperation, UNDP always faced challenges in working with NCC, MIC and SIDS in the Caribbean. The regional programme is not as well positioned to understand the challenges and address or finance the particular needs of the extremely vulnerable SIDS/MIC/NCC in the Caribbean, and it does not have the same level of activity as in Latin America.

There are constraints in terms of funding, human resources, understanding of the region and language. The standard economic indicators do not accurately reflect the reality of many countries in the region and, in fact, create a distorted external view of the current development situation. The fact that they are SIDS adds further development challenges that must be taken into consideration

¹⁵⁶ For example, 'Middle Income Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Renewed Opportunity for Development Partnership'; 'Context and Options: Contributions to a Strategic Policy Approach'; 'Issues Related to UNDP's Strategic Role and presence in MICs and NCCs'; 'Development Cooperation with MICs'.

by donors, subregional and regional institutions and the countries themselves differently when planning and implementing change strategies.

UNDP's approach to the Caribbean as a geographic entity, particularly on environmental matters, requires rethinking. The division of support according to language has not proved useful or sufficiently strategic to position UNDP's support in the region. There may be administrative reasons for grouping a particular group of countries together but there are programmatic imperatives that oblige considering different approaches. A differentiated approach does not succeed in dealing with the particular challenges shared by all SIDS, despite language differences. The broader Caribbean region is considered to begin in the Amazon River of Brazil, in the south, and reach the eastern coast of North America. Thinking in these terms opens up possibilities for problem solving through South-South cooperation. Phase 1 of the CRMI provides a good case study for how issues such as climate, energy and biodiversity can be approached in the Caribbean with a more flexible approach. For example, all countries in the Caribbean can learn from Cuba in the area of DRR. There are 19 collective SIDS in the Caribbean and they should be considered collectively in designing approaches to environment matters.

Relevant and significant efforts in the Caribbean to strategically position UNDP have been: partnerships with CARICOM and OECS for institutional strengthening of their secretariats; the coordination of responses to natural disasters and risk reduction with different UNCTs and UNDP country offices in the region; and the development of knowledge products and exchange – particularly with the publication of the Caribbean Human Development Report on Citizen Security¹⁵⁷.

The support provided to OECS and CARICOM has significantly decreased over the years and has for the most part been limited to financial and operational support (Guyana, Barbados and New York). Limited substantive support comes mostly from the UNDP country office of Barbados and OECS in distant coordination with regional programme leadership in New York. The UNDP country office in Barbados has incurred significant transaction costs and logistical challenges in managing and monitoring partnerships with OECS and CARICOM, and no additional resources from the regional programme have been allocated meaning that the cost had to be absorbed from available programme management budgets of the UNDP Barbados country office. When the UNDP subregional office in Trinidad and Tobago was operational, it also provided limited support.

There is a widespread perception among stakeholders in the Caribbean that the closure of the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago subregional office was not done transparently, in a consultative manner, or communicated appropriately. This has compromised the strategic positioning of the UNDP regional programme in the subregion. While stakeholders understand that lack of resources played a role in the decision to close the office, they do not agree that lack of results is a valid reason for closure as the office was still relatively new, and operations too recent to show concrete results with the limited resources available. Many informants considered that the office could have adjusted to the needs of the region if resources were more equally provided. Even with the limited resources, there is recognition that the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago office worked well with the regional programme in the production of the Caribbean Human Development Report on Citizen Security.

¹⁵⁷ Most recently, efforts to develop a democratic governance programme of work in the region took place in a regional democratic governance workshop held in Barbados in November 2011, to facilitate the formulation of assistance and cross-thematic programming for 2012–2015.

The regional programme's positioning in the English-speaking Caribbean is also adversely affected by the fact that incentives to work in the subregion are often lower than in other subregions. This is due to several reasons: (i) the absence of TRAC funds; (ii) the working abilities and expertise of the personnel in RSC are less prominent in this subregion; and (iii) the response of UNDP country offices and national stakeholders is also lower. All this, in a context where UNDP corporate management and donors push for rapid results, may lead to fewer incentives. In this context, the recent closing of the sub-office in Trinidad and Tobago may make things even more difficult for RSC to improve performance in this subregion.

The regional programme strategic positioning in the Caribbean could have been enhanced if, on top of providing financial resources, more substantive technical support were given to partnership and economic integration in the Eastern Caribbean. There has been long-standing collaboration between UNDP and CARICOM and OECS to key initiatives such as the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, the Caribbean Single Market Economy, the CARICOM

Commission on Youth Development, and the Caribbean HDR on Citizen Security. However, this support is mostly financial and the partner institutions have limited awareness of the services and substantive support they could access in UNDP for them and for their country members.

MANAGEMENT

Once RSC was operational, the increased efficiency helped to position UNDP more strategically in the region. The regional programme has proven efficient on a wide range of issues across subregions, and it did so with fewer resources than other regions.¹⁵⁸ The regional programme was able to raise over USD 100 million for UNDP country offices in the region during the period evaluated.

Implementation rate was also well assessed. Table 2 shows a high execution rate. The Evaluation Office survey in Annex 5 (Refer online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6678>) provides more information on the products and services best delivered by the regional programme to country offices.

Table 2. Execution Rates per Practice Area

Area	Number of Projects	Total Budget 2008-2011 (US \$)	Total Expenditure 2008-2011 (US \$)	Total Execution %
01 Conflict Prevention and Recovery	36	13,649,063	10,214,924	75
02 Environment and Energy	14	12,934,918	11,415,056	88
03 Democratic Governance	57	23,409,669	19,337,563	83
04 Poverty	41	24,137,045	16,774,349	69
05 Capacity Development	10	1,584,537	1,336,851	84
06 Gender	13	4,469,474	4,048,358	91
07 Knowledge Management	2	920,000	921,531	100
08 HIV-AIDS	16	4,033,794	3,913,203	97
Grand Total	189	85,138,500	67,961,834	75

Source: RSC October 2012

¹⁵⁸ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution at the Regional Level to Development and Corporate Results', New York, 2010.

There is evidence that the regional programme has become more efficient in responding to more country offices demands.¹⁵⁹ The Service Tracker documents that staff of RSC have been able to deliver more services/missions with the same or fewer resources than previously. In addition, the use of modern communication technology has reduced mobility costs.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the regional programme also made progress towards the implementation of recommendations made in the RCF II evaluation to improve efficiency and effectiveness. There has been an effort to diminish project dispersion and bring more focus to priorities in a revised and more cohesive programming framework. The outcomes in RPD were revised subsequent to MTE in 2010, and slightly more realistic shadow outcomes were developed with an improved results-based management framework. Despite this, the portfolio still presents weaknesses and the outcomes are still too general, and continue to lack baselines and outcome-level indicators.

Despite the effort to change the framework towards a more focused and a narrower scope of intervention, stakeholders still perceive the regional programme spread thin, trying to do much without a clear, transparent and sustainable strategy of prioritization able to reinforce the value added and competitive advantages of this regional layer of programming. Many stakeholders noted the lack of resources and work overload of regional programme staff; prevent units from responding to some demands timely and effectively and in some cases affecting the quality of responses, particularly in terms of follow-up.

Stakeholders trust UNDP as a transparent institution but admit not always understanding the criteria used to prioritize support. Many UNDP country offices and governments in the region are not clear how demands are prioritized, and how a

country is included in a regional project or receive regional funds. Some stakeholders perceive this to depend on individual relationships, which is detrimental to the sustainability of UNDP's corporate positioning and principles. A more explicit regional strategy for support to UNDP country offices is missing, not only demand-driven but based on clear communication about roles and streamlined information mechanisms. Individual interviews and the online survey both showed that the percentage of UNDP offices that find the regional programme open, transparent and accountable enough is less than optimal (46 percent).

4.3 COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION

The regional programme contributions to the interagency cooperation in the framework of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) at the regional level and in support of the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) at the national level has also contributed to strategically position UNDP and the UN system in a more coordinated and harmonized manner to support the region. Regional programme staff are actively involved in the work of UN thematic groups where the various agencies, funds and programmes participate. Some of these take place in the context of the work plan of the regional UNDP team for Latin America and the Caribbean, others happen through bilateral arrangements between UNDP and other UN agencies. Important collaborations include: with OAS and ECLAC to produce advocacy reports on democracy; with UNDPA to further the concept of democracy and citizenship; with UNEP on the joint initiative on poverty and environment (PEI); with LAC ministers of the environment, and in multistakeholder initiatives dealing with climate change and biodiversity; with ILO and UN Women on gender equality; and with UNAIDS, WHO and UNFPA on the area of HIV/AIDS.

¹⁵⁹ About 12 percent of the programme corresponded to the Caribbean and the rest were initiatives in Latin America.

Particularly, the work after the earthquake in Haiti drew on multiple linkages with the regional programme and the UN system at different levels. RSC in Panama joined the UN support to Haiti through OCHA and other UN humanitarian agencies, largely executed through the UNDP country office in the Dominican Republic, given the affected capacity of the Haiti office and the limited capacity of the port and airport at Port-au-Prince.

UNDP's role in coordinating the UN response at the regional level has been positively evaluated by different UN agencies and government stakeholders. The regional centre plays a key role in ensuring the implementation of the UNDG LAC work plan, and liaising with the UN regional directors in Panama on emerging issues on the UNDG LAC agenda. Stakeholders particularly value the support of the coordination staff in Panama for the planning and implementation of UNDAFs and harmonization of efforts, and its leadership in natural disaster relief. UNDP has offered support to other agencies in their responses to major hurricanes and earthquakes and worked on disaster preparedness and ongoing capacity-building for disaster mitigation bringing in other partnerships, such as with ECLAC for OECS. This value is accredited to UNDP country offices, as well as the regional programme, efforts and reputation.

Stakeholders for the most part commended UNDP's ability to increase donor harmonization, and convene dialogue on key policy and practical issues, and sensitive multistakeholder consultations, among national and regional partners at different levels. The regional programme assisted a number of national-level climate change processes, leading to national strategies. In addition, national counterparts complimented UNDP's sensitivity to country-driven approaches and its role in convening and leading discussions about MDGs, citizen security and regional integration.

Informants deemed the overall UNDP commitment to foster and improve country ownership in line with the Paris Declaration but there are still challenges to achieve an adequate balance between donor- and country-driven approaches to programming.

The postponement of the graduations of countries to net-contributor status is an important achievement, though the probability of increased funds is still relatively low. The increased threshold for graduation status, actively promoted by this regional programme, can be considered one of its biggest successes. The new threshold allows for UNDP's presence in countries for longer, to further strengthen institutions and negotiate new cooperation models that may better fit post-graduation needs.

Resident Representatives in the region indicate that so far little or no guidance has been provided from the regional programme or RBLAC to assist in developing a more consistent approach to working with NCCs. There have been some discussions promoted by the regional programme, but virtually no opportunities have been provided for UNDP and NCCs to discuss how to cooperate most effectively in context of the unique role and status of NCCs in the regional programme. More recently, in the Caribbean, the Regional UNDG Team for Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁶⁰ has taken steps to enhance UN system-wide coherence at the regional level and support UNCTs in CARICOM countries, in order to promote programme coherence, deliver as one and foster sustainable human development.

Many informants questioned the actual architecture of RBLAC and the regional programme related to the strategic positioning of UNDP in the region. According to RBLAC management, the current positioning and its architecture was developed to advocate, fund-raise and inform decision making at a higher level in New York

¹⁶⁰ UNDG LAC is comprised of 20 UN agencies/entities as regular members: ECLAC (the Regional Commission), FAO, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNISDR, UNESCO, UNIFEM/UN WOMEN, UNODC, UNOPS, and WFP.

and in the region. There is no conclusive evidence that a different architecture would position UNDP more strategically. What is evident is that UNDP can always position itself more strategically and needs to do so, particularly in the Caribbean. A newly hired chief of strategic monitoring and support for the Caribbean country offices has recently joined RBLAC and is expected to bring more understanding of the subregion to the bureau and strongly advocate for additional funding mechanisms.

Additional financial and technical support is still needed from UNDP in the Caribbean. The countries considered as both high-income and upper-middle-income are all SIDS; their economies are not yet diversified enough to decrease their vulnerability to major economic or climate shocks. UNDP can still support the diversification and stabilization of subregional economies and continue to build governance capacities, strengthen disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation as countries put a higher premium on access to cheaper energy via renewable as cost of fuel affects GDP heavily.

Caribbean Member States want a coordinating mechanism¹⁶¹ to direct both programming and funding priorities and help to secure a predictable flow of technical resources and funding to their region. In 2011, an agreement was reached to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of UN engagement in the Caribbean and enhance cooperation between the UN and CARICOM. Following discussion on the nature of a more appropriate coordination mechanism and considered different alternatives, UNDG LAC decided in 2011 to take on the task of acting as the new UN-CARICOM coordination mechanism to enhance coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system's engagement in the

Caribbean. UNDG LAC acted as coordination mechanism to enhance coherence and effectiveness and provide oversight and advice to ongoing UN activities and programmes in the Caribbean, and enhance the UN engagement with other regional organizations in a coherent and participatory approach. A meeting between the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNDG LAC took place in Guyana in October 2012, to agree on programmatic priorities and the approach to implement the new coordination mechanism for the Caribbean. The challenge remains in identifying areas where a regional approach offers added value to ongoing national partnerships. In view of the transnational scope of the challenges facing the Caribbean, it was agreed that information sharing, capacity-building, and institutional strengthening are key tools to implement their respective mandates.

It is worth mentioning one significant missed opportunity risking to hamper UNDP's strategic positioning in the environment area that is linked to the lack of a more structured arrangement between two particularly complementing agencies – UNEP and UNDP. UNDP is missing opportunities for not coordinating a better employment of scarce human resources of both agencies towards common goals. The two agencies have important roles to play and human resources and knowledge to exchange but there is a strong possibility that one will become increasingly marginalized in the LAC region over the next strategy period, if better circumstances for collaboration are not established in a way that respects the ongoing independence of each organization. The evaluation process concurs with the opinions that were expressed on both sides that something has to change and that this is being expressed with the best intentions and should be carried forward in this spirit.

¹⁶¹ As a result of SIDS pressure and interest, UNDP and World Bank have formed a coordinating mechanism to handle funds on energy, called SIDSDOCK, but it has so far failed. The complexity of politics in the Caribbean often challenges timely decision-making.

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents the main conclusions from the evaluation, followed by recommendations for consideration by UNDP. Given that conclusions are only meant to be a general overview of the programme, they do not correspond on a one-to-one basis with recommendations.

Recommendations are aimed at addressing the main challenges identified in the previous sections in order to strengthen UNDP's contribution to regional development results. They are presented in such a way as to help the main stakeholders facilitate further multistakeholder consultations, to generate options or alternatives for programme improvement.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. UNDP has made relevant contributions to the development outcomes planned in the regional programme and to national development in the region.

The results proved more effective and sustainable when governments and other partners engaged sufficiently for shared ownership of interventions. In these cases, use of the limited resources of the regional programme was also more efficiently applied.

The regional programme was able to do more with the same or fewer resources, but the effectiveness of these investments was linked more to its strategies for sustainability than to the increased quantity of demands addressed. One of the comparative advantages of the regional programme, in a context of shrinking resources, was its recognized ability to leverage and mobilize

resources for country offices and other partners and stakeholders.

The programme still lacks an effective system for tracking and evaluating contributions to outcomes, value for money and the cost-efficiency of interventions in a systematic fashion.

Conclusion 2. In the context of countries graduating to a higher development status and increasingly scarce development aid resources, a failure to develop would put the relevance and the strategic positioning of the institution at risk.

Upper middle-income countries, for example, are confronting development challenges for which UNDP could provide improved substantial assistance but which it is not supporting to its full extent at present. These include: improving the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of their governance systems; institutionalization of capacities; sustainable growth; and resilience to natural disasters and other environmental challenges. The presence of UNDP was perceived to be particularly important in highlighting, and in some cases providing support to addressing, the considerable remaining inequalities and vulnerabilities among, and within, countries in the region.

Conclusion 3. The added value and comparative advantages of the regional programme lie in its upstream work to facilitate regional and thematic networking, enhance cross-regional knowledge management, facilitate the transfer of South-South solutions, and engage stakeholders in sensitive topics.

The comparative advantages of the regional programme are becoming more evident in a context where it is increasingly difficult for UNDP to work in depth on a country-by-country basis, given the limited programme resources available, the large number of countries, and their widely differing development status. A model of small, under-resourced units, at headquarters or in RSCs, expected to implement, advise on and assist large numbers of projects in countries with diverse contexts and challenges is not feasible. Management and administrative resources are not adequate to support the range of demands placed on the regional programme, given its multi-country, multi-level and multi-partner programme context. If core resources at the country office level continue to dwindle, technical support from the regional programme will continue to become even more important for country offices. Consequently, strong, broad-based technical capacities in the regional programme will become increasingly essential.

Conclusion 4. The regional programme does not have a strategy suited to assisting national partners to address the needs and vulnerabilities of the Caribbean.

Together with insufficient support to country offices, the risk exists of further alienating UNDP from contributing strategically to development results in the subregion. The Caribbean – the Small Island Developing States, in particular – lacks a distinct orientation from the regional bureau. Biodiversity, climate change, energy and disaster risk reduction are key priorities for the Caribbean, and these areas provide the best option for Caribbean country offices to mobilize resources. The UNDP approach to the Caribbean as a geographic entity or language-distinct area is not appropriate. Limited funding and interest from donors have amplified the difficulties in the greater Caribbean, and have hampered UNDP support in the subregion. Other aspects, such as lack of linguistic abilities, local understanding and demand have also interfered.

Conclusion 5. The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation and the promotion and development of South-South solutions.

RSC has proved to be useful in facilitating the engagement of country offices and countries; disseminating best practices; providing tools (guides, roadmaps and technical assistance); and linking interested countries to cooperate with one another. While some country-level international cooperation organizations are increasingly demanding support from UNDP to develop their capacities to effectively manage their development cooperation programmes and South-South cooperation mechanisms, others already have the capacity to undertake this work but need a structure to channel resources (both technical and financial), as well as a programme approach to South-South cooperation to facilitate its inclusion in regional programmes and projects. Working with country offices through ongoing consultation, rather than conducting a one-time process to design the regional programme, would enable the programme to address issues as they emerge and keep the focus on critical local matters.

Conclusion 6. The alignment between evaluation, knowledge management, communication, capacity development and South-South solutions is insufficient to effectively promote learning in an integrated manner to support the UNDP goal of being strategically positioned as a knowledge organization.

The programme lacks a clear understanding of the role of each of the cross-cutting areas and how they can best support the main practice areas to add effectiveness to the regional programme and services provided.

The UNDP business model, as set forth in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013, is based on strengthening national capacities by providing effective knowledge management, and corporate and regional policy and advisory support that is

closer to where it is needed on the ground, so that services are responsive to the needs of country programmes. Using a results-based management corporate approach, this would entail linking monitoring and evaluation with impact metrics associated with developing capacities and the use of knowledge to prompt action that generates learning and change. The current level of integration between these core areas does not reflect the essence of the business model.

There is duplication and even competition within the regional programme, to the detriment of its coherence and effectiveness in support to country offices. The programme needs a unified process including the systematic use of quality indicators for measuring performance and results. The process would identify and evaluate good and bad practices and would analyse contexts in which practices are most appropriate for use or adaptation, dissemination of lessons learned, and informed decision-making. In this way, the synergies between these areas could translate into better accountability processes, enhanced results dissemination and sustainability, and more effective fund-raising.

Conclusion 7. The approach of mainstreaming cross-cutting areas into the regional programme is either not effective enough or does not adequately reflect the scope and nature of such areas.

As a consequence, the results framework reflects only a limited portion of the achievements of the regional programme in those thematic areas.

Although attempts to mainstream gender have translated into a distinct added value in the achievement of development results, gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently visible, explicit or promoted, and the impact of the regional programme on women and men is not systematically considered at every stage of the programme cycle. Steps to mainstream gender have been largely organic, depending on committed individuals rather than emerging from an institutionalized effort. On the other hand, mainstreaming HIV/

AIDS into other areas no longer reflects the HIV strategy in the region, which follows a human rights-based approach to the epidemic given that prevalence and incidence in the region are a direct consequence of stigma and discriminatory practices against vulnerable and excluded populations. Neither are the contributions to development outcomes of other cross-cutting areas, such as capacity development, South-South solutions, knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation, adequately reflected in results-oriented annual reporting.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. The regional programme needs to focus on fewer and more realistic thematic priorities and more strictly prioritize initiatives in which UNDP brings a regional added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic partners able to support countries and, when and if appropriate, regional institutions in taking ownership to ensure the continuity and sustainability of results.

The regional programme must guard against getting drawn into initiatives in which it cannot maintain a steady presence or is unlikely to be able to contribute to long-term, sustainable results. It makes particular sense, at the regional level, to focus on addressing sensitive and underlying issues unlikely to be tackled at the country level, where less progress has been made, less capacity or political will exists, and where themes make sense only if tackled at a regional level (examples would include climate change adaptation, security, and SIDS issues). However, such a decision should not be prescriptive in nature; it should be approached and decided in a participatory and deliberative manner with different stakeholders to ensure buy-in and a regional agenda that is complementary to what UNDP is already working on at the global and country levels. It could also mean focusing on fewer prioritized target groups and constituencies or key specific issues affecting them.

Recommendation 2. The regional programme should be less involved in project implementation and should invest its limited resources on upstream initiatives such as: policy and technical advice; advocacy; dialogue; partnership building; multistakeholder coordination; networking; knowledge brokering; and capacity development.

An upstream approach would not exclude work on selected downstream activities at the country level, but these activities should be carefully chosen and investments need to be clearly aligned with transformational change, either linked to the possibility of replicability, upscaling and where project experience/piloting is necessary to feed better informed policy advice. Work in the above upstream areas is fundamental in a region of middle-income and net contributor countries that may be less inclined to accept donor aid and are less concerned with aid effectiveness. This approach should build on increased consultation with partner countries and institutions, bringing multiple regional concerns into overarching upstream initiatives particular to each subregion. Feedback from regional institutions should be sought on a regular basis, particularly in designing the regional programme. The programme would thus be aligned with the Strategic Plan and would respond realistically to regional challenges given the available resources. The process should take the heterogeneity of the region into account.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should rethink its approach to the Caribbean and should develop a new development cooperation strategy with an adequate resource mobilization plan to allow UNDP to tackle the specific challenges, needs, priorities and opportunities of the Caribbean countries and the different development status and vulnerabilities of SIDS, net contributor countries and middle-income countries.

In addition to the elements enumerated above, any new strategy for the Caribbean should include a strong South-South cooperation dimension among Latin America and Caribbean

actors, bearing in mind the opportunities, nature and needs of the Caribbean countries. The subregion should also be better linked to RSC through a more substantive technical advisory role, recognizing that there are currently major shortcomings in the ability of the centre to serve the Caribbean and recruiting staff better able to fund-raise, speak the subregional languages and stimulate demand. Understanding Caribbean particularities alone will not solve the fact that there is still limited funding and little formal demand for UNDP and its services in the Caribbean. Therefore, the new strategy would also need to stimulate demand and advice on various modalities of international cooperation, better aligned with cost-sharing models and less dependent on international and UNDP core funding.

Recommendation 4. Mainstreaming strategies for cross-cutting areas should be reviewed.

Efforts should be intensified to integrate gender into the overall programming approach and into project development, should include formal learning about what constitutes gender in all programme areas, and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming should be designated. A comprehensive strategy and an operational plan should be drafted by all programme areas, with the assistance of the regional gender team, to make explicit commitments on gender mainstreaming and reach a common understanding of what should be done on gender mainstreaming under each practice area, and with what objective.

All programme designs should incorporate gender analysis, and adequate financial resources should be made available and explicit for gender mainstreaming under each project, programme and thematic area. Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS should continue as long as the Strategic Plan requires; but if it remains a priority, the regional programme should include a specific outcome for this theme, corresponding to the vertical nature of the intervention area. Establishing a specific outcome for HIV/AIDS would allow

achievements in dimensions of the mandate that are not visible now to be reflected, as well as the human rights-based approach that characterizes the HIV strategy in the region.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should rethink how the regional programme can more strategically and realistically support triangular and South-South cooperation and measure the concrete effects and sustainability of those initiatives in a more systematic manner.

RSC should discuss with other units in UNDP ways to improve the effectiveness of existing knowledge-generation and -sharing systems and should build on the inherent opportunities for enhanced South-South knowledge and technology exchange and cooperation. UNDP should proactively systematize and share not only best practices, but more importantly, learning and knowledge linked to the factors that make each practice generate more cost-effective and sustainable results.

Steps should be also taken towards consolidating a programming approach to South-South cooperation. Concrete, sustainable contributions to development from South-South cooperation initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean are still not easily identifiable, or in some cases too early to document. To date, most of these regional initiatives have been linked to knowledge fairs, study tours and conferences. Some of those engagements promoted further achievements, but the regional programme needs to be more selective when engaging in 'one-off' knowledge exchanges that do not guarantee follow-up or continued efforts until concrete results are achieved.

Several countries in the region are strengthening their own international development cooperation organizations, which comprise a knowledge exchange niche to which the regional programme can contribute. In all regions, emerging donors are supporting the expansion of South-South and triangular cooperation and offering a range

of financial, technical and other services to other developing countries. It would be advisable for the regional programme to focus on realistically supporting just a few intraregional, one-to-one interventions with specific goals for cooperation, along with realistic time-frames to enable the complete identification and transfer of knowledge to implement solutions.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should rethink how the cross-cutting areas can best support the core practice areas, increasing synergies and more thoroughly integrating planning, monitoring and learning from evaluations into knowledge management, capacity development, South-South solutions and communication in a more structured and focused environment to bring about a combined perspective for action, accountability and learning.

Knowledge management, as well as monitoring and evaluation, should be integrated into programming from the outset in designing programmes and initiatives. Particular attention should be paid to the end goal of all contributions, especially those linked to knowledge products – namely, to promote development outcomes.

Demand for and commitment to use the knowledge products need to be ascertained before they are commissioned, to guarantee the cost-efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of initiatives. The use of these knowledge products and their contribution to learning and behaviour change must be more carefully and systematically tracked with the support of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to account for their cost-effectiveness and value added.

When appropriate, the regional programme should also identify opportunities to exchange technical capacities with other United Nations organizations in the implementation of regional and country programmes, as the experience and capabilities of United Nations staff is often more highly valued than that of external consultants. The new regional programme should follow the

above recommendations in formulating more realistic outcomes that are proportionate to the limited funds available.

A results-based framework should incorporate mechanisms for tracking, monitoring and evaluating contributions to the outcomes that are made with 'soft' assistance, particularly the effects of knowledge products, research, advocacy and advisory services. Cost-effectiveness indicators should be systematically included, and the use of

process and intermediate indicators is encouraged. The Service Tracker should be realigned to the new model of measuring contributions to results. The imbalance that exists in the cost-recovery business model needs to be considered carefully in the new programming exercise since it has implications for the effectiveness of efforts to mainstream capacity development, South-South solutions and knowledge management across countries and thematic areas.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

The 2012 programme of work approved by the Executive Board indicates that the Evaluation Office should conduct independent evaluations of the regional programmes implemented under the responsibility of UNDP's five regional bureaux.¹⁶² The objectives of a regional programme evaluation are to:

- Strengthen accountability in reporting to the Executive Board;
- Facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at regional and corporate levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014; and
- Provide stakeholders with an objective assessment of contributions achieved through UNDP support and partnerships through the regional programme of a given period.

The evaluation will analyse the regional programme's contributions to development in the region during the current programme period and UNDP's strategic position within the region. A set of forward-looking recommendations will be drawn at the end of the evaluation. It is expected that evaluation results will be used in the formulation of the next regional programme document. Results should also feed into other relevant evaluations planned by the Evaluation Office in 2012-2013, such as the global programme evaluation.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 UNDP PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

UNDP delivers support to its programme countries through three programme frameworks:

- **Global programmes** run by two global sectoral policy bureaux, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (BCPR);
- **Regional programmes** run by five regional bureaux (for Africa, Arab States, Asia and Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and Caribbean) through the regional centres and headquarters in New York; and
- **Country programmes** and multi-country programmes run by country and multi-country offices under each regional bureau.

Each of these programmes is defined by a programme document approved by UNDP's Executive Board, which allocates core funding for the delivery of the programme. In addition, activities in each programme are financed by funds from external sources, usually provided to achieve specific objectives within each programme.

2.2 REGIONAL PROGRAMMES – GENERAL STRUCTURE

Regional programmes are designed to support the region and countries to achieve development results. The Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean works with UNDP's four focus areas, namely: poverty reduction;

¹⁶² DP/2011/24, Programme of Work for the Evaluation Office for 2011-2012, 'Annual Report on Evaluation in UNDP 2010', Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 6-17 June 2011.

democratic governance; environment and energy; and crisis prevention and recovery. Within this structure, the regional programmes also address such cross-cutting issues as gender equality, capacity development and South-South cooperation, knowledge management, and HIV/AIDS. Typically, a regional programme involves the following types of activities:

- **Regional products and activities** that intend to support contribution to development results, behaviour change or public goods, such as advocacy materials or tools that can be used by any party concerned in the region.
- **Subregional or cross-border activities** that are delivered in multiple countries, addressing an issue of a cross-border nature, such as illegal drug trafficking and others.
- **Multi-country activities** that are put together for the purpose of achieving cost-efficiency by organizing a group event (e.g. organizing a seminar of interest to multiple countries), for the purpose of addressing politically-sensitive issues (e.g. gender equality and human rights), or for any other purposes¹⁶³ where participation of multiple countries would be deemed more appropriate.
- **Technical and policy support to country programme activities** to leverage country programme activities.
- **Country-level activities** implemented at the country level, and could appear as *de facto* country programme activities. An example would be pilot projects in selected countries, financed by the regional programme under an umbrella regional project.

2.3 THE RBLAC REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2008-2013¹⁶⁴

The Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 2008, and later

extended to 2013. RBLAC covers 26 country offices and operates with the support of UNDP's Regional Service Centre (RSC) in Panama. RSC offers support to country offices to strengthen their capacity for policy dialogue, project management, and promote strategic alliances and networks and distribution of knowledge in high-priority areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. In practice, RBLAC has delegated implementation of the regional programme to RSC, except governance and poverty initiatives that are implemented from headquarters in New York.

RSC draws on a team of professionals and experts working in focus areas such as poverty reduction and the MDGs, democratic governance, environment and energy, crisis prevention and recovery, HIV/AIDS, gender, knowledge management, capacity development and South-South cooperation. In addition, RSC instituted an associate experts network to strengthen and optimize its capacity to prompt response to the assistance needs of UNDP country offices in the region. The associate experts networks constitute an element for rapid advisory and technical services, strengthening communities of practice and constitute an element for knowledge management networks in various areas. The knowledge and practice of the professionals selected to be part of the network represent a source of feedback for the different communities of practice and knowledge management practice networks, at the regional and global level.

RPD focuses on inclusive growth, reducing poverty and inequalities in the region and on UNDP's coordination role on behalf of the United Nations. The regional programme also aims at concretely advancing the United Nations' reform and the harmonization agendas. It offers a framework for regional efforts to improve the development effectiveness of the United Nations and international cooperation and sets out a plan to ensure

¹⁶³ Important to mention also initiatives that are regional due to the economics of scale and the initiatives where initiatives and good practices from one country are transferred to other under regional programme initiative; many times the regional programme promoted initiatives that are strongly related to regional knowledge management efforts.

¹⁶⁴ Further details on the programme and its activities are found in: <<http://www.undp.org/latinamerica/>>.

that UNDP leads efforts for coordination, collaboration and joint work with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Most recently, the programmes have also been asked to address the new Agenda of Change¹⁶⁵ proposed by UNDP's Administrator. According to RPD the programme concentrates on regional¹⁶⁶ initiatives through the following services:

- demand-driven technical and policy advice for the formulation and implementation of public policy;
- knowledge management, including the development of conceptual frameworks in key areas, systematization and dissemination of good practices; and development of tools for policy advice, programme support and capacity development;
- analysis and advocacy of key challenges facing the region and its subregions, together with recognized research centres and specialists;
- development and management of projects and programmes in the four focus areas, including support to national projects;
- at the request of governments, creation and facilitation of spaces for dialogue and consensus-building, including support to national and local processes and assuring civic engagement; development of effective

partnerships with the full range of development actors, with a particular emphasis on other United Nations entities, strengthening UNDP contribution to coordination of the United Nations system in the region.

All regional and subregional projects developed as part of this RPD should clearly add value at the regional or subregional level. To this end, the criteria for project selection are:

- identifying and promoting regional public goods;
- managing cross-border externalities and spillovers;
- generating advocacy processes regionally, supporting regional dialogues spaces and promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge.

RPD focuses on reducing poverty and inequalities in the region through four thematic practice areas: poverty and inequality reduction, and MDG achievement; democratic governance, crisis prevention and environment and energy.

Below is a breakdown of the expenditures per practice area and number of development projects classified by outcomes implemented by the regional programme from 2008-2011.

Table A1. Number of Projects by Thematic Area (2008-2011) and Expenditure (in US \$)						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	total	# of projects
Poverty	2,169,495	3,293,028	2,128,569	882,352	8,465,405	32
Democracy	722,063	3,499,890	4,244,624	1,554,177	10,020,754	46
CPR	824,878	501,950	412,512	310,240	2,049,580	18
Environment	86,554	690,959	117,452	111,000	1,005,965	5
Total	3,802,990	7,985,828	6,903,156	2,857,769	21,541,705	101

Source: ATLAS

¹⁶⁵ The change agenda is focused on headquarters and regional service centres. It seeks to accelerate the pace of change by bringing about a future state in which UNDP is: strategically focused, results driven, global development thought leader, nurtures and maintains a strong set of partnerships, provides high-quality policy services and translates policy into solutions, delivers excellence in customer focused services and empowers staff.

¹⁶⁶ The region consists of several subregions, including English-speaking Caribbean and the evaluation will take this diversity well into account during the assessment.

RPD specifies that a human-rights-based approach underpins regional programme work, including three main cross-cutting areas: promotion of gender equality; developing capacities and fostering national ownership; HIV/AIDS and promoting South-South cooperation. It additionally includes knowledge management as an integrating axis of service provision to the country offices and programmes in the region, where the Knowledge Management Unit gives technical and methodological assistance; and South-South cooperation is assigned to the Capacity Development Unit. HIV/AIDS operates as another cross-cutting area.

The next regional programme needs to strike the right balance between the supply of strategic regional interventions based on UNDP comparative advantages and demand for technical and policy advisory support and; capacity development for the implementation of country programmes within the framework of each CCA and UNDAF.

3. SCOPE, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 THE SCOPE OF EVALUATION

For the purpose of this evaluation, the 'regional programme' will be defined as a set of activities as set out in RPD approved by UNDP's Executive Board. These activities are largely implemented by the regional service centre but in some cases by the regional bureau at the headquarters or by the country offices. Furthermore, they could include activities that use resources provided by global or country programmes. Because some regional programme activities were undertaken through, or as a support service to, the country programme activities, the contribution by these activities to the realization of intended outcomes should be assessed in conjunction with the associated country programme activities.

The RBLAC regional programme evaluation will assess the practice areas of interventions and cross-cutting themes as defined in the RBLAC RPD for period 2008-2013, according to the established evaluation criteria. UNDP's contributions to the areas through a range of activities, as well as its strategic position in the region will be examined. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the regional programme responded to the recommendations and the management response to the previous final evaluation and the mid-term evaluation.

3.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation will analyse and assess the strategic positioning of the regional programme and its performance in contributing to the realization of each programme outcome and other unexpected outcomes, such as the contribution provided to the achievement to outcomes of various Country Programme Documents, applying the following criteria and answering the question that follow, providing in each case an analysis on the factors that explain such performance:

- 1. Relevance:** How relevant are the RPD intended outcomes and programme interventions to (a) the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region (at regional and country levels¹⁶⁷); (b) promotion of UN values and UNDP mandate; and (c) its comparative strengths?

Is the programme, as designed and implemented, aligned with the main priorities for development, as expressed by national governments and relevant regional organizations?

Is it addressing pressing development challenges that are regional (or subregional) in nature or scope?

¹⁶⁷ It is important to note that under the regional programme many of the activities are realized at the country levels and in close collaboration of the UNDP country offices, it is important assess how the UNDP country offices see the regional programme (support provided, alignment with the national initiatives, value added, etc.)

How responsive has the programme been to new and important needs and opportunities that may have arisen in the region (at regional and country levels) after programme design?

How adaptable was the regional programme to rapidly changing contexts (economic crisis, natural disasters, reduction in funding, etc.)?

Was the balance between the different types of activities (regional public goods, subregional issues, multi-country interventions, policy advice, technical support to country offices, etc.) and the emphasis on results in the countries and knowledge products appropriate in view of regional needs?

Are programme interventions clearly within UNDP's mandate and congruent with its Strategic Framework?

Is the relative weight given to each practice area in the programme appropriate?

How has the programme contributed to people's empowerment and an improvement in people's lives and their environment?

Is the programme addressing significant equity issues in the region (e.g. the poorest and most marginalized, gender, ethnic or religious minorities, etc.)?

Were there attempts to foster inclusiveness, promote dialogue and reduce social stigma?

How has the regional programme helped UNDP position itself in the region vis-à-vis governments and their programmes as well as other development agencies and civil society organizations to maximize its relevance and leverage?

To what extent was the regional programme designed to make use of UNDP's comparative strengths, e.g. promoting capacity development, impartiality/neutrality, convening capacity and public-private partnerships, and South-South cooperation?

Does the regional programme include types and areas of activities that are best implemented at a regional level rather than through UNDP country or global programmes?

2. Effectiveness: To what extent has the regional programme contributed to the realization of the intended outcomes as outlined in the regional programme document and key project documents? Has the regional programme contributed to other unexpected outcomes?

What are the most salient results achieved by the programme under each of the focus areas? What are the areas and interventions with the most promising impact?

How do these achieved results compare with planned results?

How responsive has the programme been to linked technical backstopping needs expressed by country offices?

Was such technical support of high quality and effective?

What are the main examples of country office results achieved with the help of the regional programme and/or RSC?

How has RSC responded to needs expressed outside the regional programme?

What progress was made in the implementation of the management responses from previous evaluations?

What are the obstacles, risks or constraints the programme faced?

3. Efficiency: Has the regional programme made good use of its financial and human resources?

What resources have UNDP and donors made available to the regional programme and RSC (staff, financial resources)?

How judiciously were these resources utilized? Could the programme have achieved more with the same resources, or made the same contribution with fewer resources?

Has the regional programme been the most efficient vehicle to deliver the programme results, given the amount of resources available?

Did the programme compete for resources with country offices? Did it add resources or substitute for country offices resources?

How effective has the regional programme been in terms of supporting resource mobilization needs (DGTTF, PACDE, and GEF) expressed by country offices?

4. Sustainability: To what extent are the results that UNDP contributed to through the regional programme sustainable?

Were appropriate exit strategies included in project design and implemented, if appropriate?

Did UNDP engage adequately and successfully in national/regional capacity development? With what results?

Are the results achieved well known and 'owned' regionally and nationally?

Are catalytic interventions and pilot projects capitalized upon?

Are lessons learned from pilot projects and others disseminated?

Have projects or interventions been scaled up, replicated or transferred?

What other factors and externalities may reduce or strengthen sustainability (e.g. world financial crisis, middle income status, etc.)?

Even though the regional programme is implemented in a wide range of contexts, the evaluation is looking at a standard programming framework.

As a result, there are some standard explanatory factors that can be assumed to affect performance, for example covering:

Partnerships: How well did the regional programme use its partnerships (e.g. with civil society, private sector, local government, donors, regional organizations and international development partners) to improve its performance, while at the same time protecting UNDP's neutrality? To what degree are there coordination, collaboration and synergies between the different interventions, entities and practices that make up the programme, and what is the extent of information sharing between the different programme 'hubs' (New York, regional centre, project management units, country offices)?

Gender equality and human rights: Did the regional programme incorporate gender equality and human rights aspects into its programme? How effective has been the contribution to specific development results and behaviour changes linked to gender and also how effective was RSC and the regional programme in mainstreaming gender in the practice areas in light of the gender equality strategy, the inter-practice area work and in the light of the recommendations of the previous evaluations?

Capacity development: Did the regional programme adequately invest in, and focus on, national capacity development to ensure sustainability and promote efficiency?

Project/programme design: Did the projects and programmes have a well-established design and strategy to ensure their performance (e.g. an appropriate mix of modalities, i.e. regional public goods, subregional activities, multi-country interventions, policy advice, capacity-building, technical support to country offices, and country-level activities) to maximize performance in view of regional needs?

Knowledge management: Did the regional programme adequately incorporate knowledge management and knowledge-based approaches

in the provision of services to country offices? Are the knowledge products (reports, studies, etc.) and knowledge activities (communities of practice, sharing and transfer among countries) delivered by the regional programme and regional service centre relevant and useful for country needs? Are they of high quality and credibility? Are they used as project development references and capacity building materials? Did they succeed in contributing effectively to the achievement of programme outcomes?

South-South solutions. Did the regional programme adequately facilitate South-South solutions to promote horizontal cooperation?

3.3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation framework consists of the key inter-related set of questions derived from standard evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and factors that can be assumed that can affect performance as listed above: partnerships, gender equality and human rights; capacity development, project/programme design, knowledge management and South-South solutions.

The aspect that UNDP regional work and presence are linked with almost every aspect of the organization poses methodological challenges that will be further discussed during the inception phase with stakeholders and the evaluation team. Since these linkages were not spelled out and the results framework not particularly specific at various levels, tracing causalities and establishing plausible contributions of UNDP work and presence at the regional level to the achievements of development results will require a tailored evaluation designed to overcome the challenges to the extent possible. The evaluation will use both qualitative and quantitative data but given the limitations of the nature of the evaluation, qualitative methods will be predominantly used. The evaluation will be quality assured by Evaluation Office staff and an external advisory panel.

Selection of sample projects, activities and countries

The programme has a large number of activities that the evaluation team will not be able to cover all of them in depth within the available amount of time and effort. The evaluation team will select a sample set of activities to evaluate. Such a sample set should be selected based on the following criteria:

- They should sufficiently cover each of the 12 programme outcomes, thematic and cross-cutting areas;
- They should sufficiently cover all the types of activities;
- They should cover all the activities that are considered strategically important or financially significant. What is considered strategically significant and financially significant will be further defined in alignment with the reality of the programme during the scoping mission when the sample will be further defined;
- They should reasonably cover different beneficiary countries.

The Evaluation Office will, in consultation with BDP, BCPR and RBLAC, select a sample of five representative countries that will be visited to validate the findings coming out of the desk reviews and information and views from the initial interviews in headquarters and Panama. Country visits will be used also to identify good practices and lessons for the future at country, regional and corporate levels.

The sample of countries will be selected on the basis of: balance of programme, project portfolio and services provided to countries, geographical locations of programme, projects and activities, and lessons learning potential.

Data collection and analysis

Data will be collected through various means, including the following:

Desk reviews: The evaluation team will collect and review all relevant documentation, including

the following: i) regional programme documents; ii) project documents and activity reports; iii) past evaluation and self-assessment reports; iv) knowledge products from the regional programme, e.g. published reports and training materials; v) client surveys on support services provided to country offices; vi) country office reports; vii) UNDP's corporate strategies and reports; and viii) relevant government, media, academic publications.

Analysis of download statistics and citations:

The extent of dissemination and influence of key knowledge products will be assessed through an analysis of available download statistics and a review of how much the media have quoted and/or relayed key messages from UNDP publications.¹⁶⁸

Field visits in sampled countries: The evaluation team will visit selected countries and/or programme sites to observe first-hand progress and achievements made and to collect best practices/lessons learned. The sample of countries will be based on a thorough mapping of programme interventions and will take into account the diverse levels of development in the region. A case-study approach will be used to identify and highlight issues that can be further investigated across the regional programme.

Stakeholder interviews: The evaluation team will conduct face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with relevant stakeholders and clients including: i) UNDP staff (managers and programme/project officers) at headquarters, RSC and country offices; and ii) other UN agencies, iii) policy makers, beneficiaries, civil society organizations and donors in the sample of countries visited by the evaluation team. Focus groups may be organized as appropriate.

Survey: A general survey will be conducted to collect feedback from all UNDP country offices and practice leaders in the region. A

common survey form may be prepared by the Evaluation Office that can be used for other regional programme evaluations planned in 2012.

Data analysis

During the main evaluation phase, as the data are collected, the evaluation team should engage in the analysis of the data. The result of the data analysis should be structured as follows:

- The findings, namely corroborated facts and statements;
- Assessments, identifying the factors that led to the assessments made (by outcome and by evaluation criteria);
- Conclusions, general statements on the value and performance of the programme addressing broadly the evaluation questions, and underlying factors and features of the programme that led to such conclusions and lessons learned; and
- Recommendations

3.4 EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team will consist of six team members, including a task manager from UNDP Evaluation Office as the team leader of the evaluation and five team specialists to be commissioned to cover each main area and cross-cutting issues.

The task manager will act as the team leader for the team, providing methodological guidance and supporting the conduct of the evaluation, coordinating the preparation of the evaluation plan, the draft reports and the presentations.

Each team specialist will be responsible for building an evaluation matrix to assess each area with its outcomes and cross-cutting issues according to the set criteria and main evaluation questions. Each consultant will also be responsible for drafting parts of the report and providing

¹⁶⁸ Within UNDP, there might also be opportunities to exploit data from the corporate knowledge system called Teamworks to try and chart knowledge flows, given that the region appears to have been an early adopter.

findings, conclusions and recommendations for the areas and cross-cutting issues.

Five specialists will be recruited to cover the following area each:

- democratic governance
- human development, poverty and MDG achievement including HIV/AIDS
- crisis prevention and citizen security
- energy, environment and disaster risk
- gender equality and mainstreaming

Each consultant will also look into all cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, knowledge management, capacity development and South-South solutions as appropriate.

Efforts will be made to try to compose a team with consultants primarily from the region or extensive proven experience in the region and gender balance.

Team qualifications

All team members should have:

- Knowledge of the regional context, development issues and challenges, with proven experience in conducting evaluation in the region;
- Extensive knowledge on the thematic area to be covered;
- Experience in programme evaluation and mastery of techniques and methods of data collection, interviews and quantitative and qualitative analysis;
- Proven drafting skills and teamwork with excellent analysis and synthesis skills;
- Master's degree (preferably Ph.D.) in courses related to the areas to be evaluated;
- Familiarity with UNDP or UN operations will be advantageous;
- Work experience in gender and/or HIV/AIDS will be advantageous;
- At least eight years of professional experience in the area that will evaluate;
- Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and multicultural environment;
- Respect to deadlines of delivery outputs within the agreed time-frame;
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Spanish and preferably also working knowledge of French and Portuguese.

3.5 COUNTRY VISITS

For data collection, the evaluation team may choose to make some country visits to have more in-depth interviews, discussions with a broader range of stakeholders, and observe field operations. Since each evaluation team member may cover different countries in country visits, the team should prepare a standard set of questions for each activity concerned to be used by every team member.

3.6 INCEPTION PLAN

During the initial phase, the evaluation team must prepare an inception plan and have it reviewed by the Evaluation Office and the regional bureau. The plan should contain:

- The sample set of activities to be evaluated more in-depth;
- Elaborated evaluation questions for each area or outcomes;
- Intended sources of information and data collection methods for each activity: e.g. list of implementing partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders to be interviewed; list of documents to be reviewed;
- Country visit plans, and coverage of projects and non-project activities in each visit.

4. EVALUATION PROCESS

PREPARATORY PHASE

The Evaluation Office task manager/team leader will hold consultations with the regional bureau and the regional centre to further define the evaluation purpose and scope. The Evaluation Office will identify and recruit external consultants to complete the evaluation team.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS ASSESSMENT PHASE

A list of key knowledge products and activities will be prepared by the Evaluation Office in consultation with RBLAC and RSC, for in-depth review of their dissemination and influence on opinion makers and decision makers.

INCEPTION PHASE

During this phase, an appropriate list of regional projects and activities should be prepared by the Evaluation Office in consultation with RBLAC and RSC, for in-depth reviews during the evaluation. This sample should focus on the most important and visible interventions and reflect different programme focus areas and types of regional activities that exist in the regional programme.

Each evaluation team member will conduct a desk review of relevant materials, documents and programme information provided by the Evaluation Office, including key knowledge products.

At this stage, travel plans should be drawn for each team member based on his/her specialty and the types of projects and activities implemented in each sampled country.

After the preliminary desk study, the evaluation team will travel to the Regional Service Centre in Panama for a week to launch the inception phase. During this period, the evaluation team will: i) receive a briefing from the team leader on the general evaluation process and methodology; ii) conduct consultations with regional centre staff;

collect further materials from the regional centre, and hold team meetings for planning; iii) collect any relevant programme/project/activity related information, and iv) prepare the inception plan that contains the theories of change for each area or outcome and agreed on a detailed evaluation design matrix and identifying and developing any data collection instruments required.

MAIN EVALUATION PHASE

Once the inception plan is approved, the team will precede with data collection activities, including country/field visits, in accordance with the evaluation design and process set forth in the inception plan. Once the team members have completed their data collection, and systematized the data for presentation and analysis the team will reconvene in the regional centre for a joint review and analysis of data/information collected by all team members and validation with RSC staff. The data analysis session by the team should clearly identify the following:

- Findings: Corroborated facts and statements
- Assessments: Examination of the findings by using the evaluation criteria with identification of factors behind the assessments made
- Preliminary conclusions: General statements with common factors and features about the strategic positioning, value and performance of the programme
- Preliminary recommendations: Recommendations to address each of the conclusions.

A debriefing session will be presented by the evaluation team on a preliminary set of conclusions and recommendations at the end of the main evaluation phase, as an additional opportunity for validating the team's assessments.

REPORT PREPARATION PHASE

Once departing from the regional centre, the evaluation team will finalize a draft report based on the analysis conducted and the feedback received in the debriefing session. This draft (so-called

'zero' draft) will be reviewed by the Evaluation Office, and the team will revise it if there are any comments. Once the Evaluation Office has cleared the report, the draft ('first draft') will be shared with the regional bureau and the regional centre for comments. Based on the comments received, the team will revise the report, while recording any changes made in an audit trail document. Once the report has been further revised in a final draft ('second draft'), a stakeholders' workshop may be organized, if appropriate, for the presentation of evaluation results and general discussions. Results of the final evaluation report will be presented to the Executive Board, and will be made available in public.

5. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

UNDP Evaluation Office: The Evaluation Office team leader will manage the overall evaluation and ensure coordination and liaison with the regional bureau, the regional centre and other offices at headquarters. The team leader will provide reference materials and methodological guidance to the evaluation team, and ensure that an appropriate quality assurance mechanism exists during the evaluation. Given that there are five regional programme evaluations planned in 2012, the Evaluation Office will facilitate the standardization of data collection methods across regions as much as possible.

The evaluation team: The evaluation team will be led by the UNDP EO evaluation manager who will have the overall responsibility for providing guidance and leadership to team members, and coordinating the drafting and finalization of the report; and the team specialists will provide the expertise in the subject areas of the evaluation, and be responsible for drafting key parts of the report. The evaluation team, collectively, is responsible for developing an evaluation design, undertaking data-collection activities, and preparing the draft and final reports for submission to the Evaluation Office, as well as any supporting documents prepared during the evaluation.

Regional centre: The regional centre will take a lead role in supporting the evaluation team in liaising with the key partners and making available to the team all necessary information regarding UNDP activities in the region. A focal point will be identified to liaise with the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team. The regional centre is requested to provide any logistical and administrative support necessary to the evaluation team during the evaluation.

Regional bureau and country offices: The regional bureau and country offices will facilitate the evaluation by providing necessary information and documents as requested by the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team.

6. DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team will produce the following deliverables (in English):

- **Inception plan:** The evaluation team will prepare a detailed plan of work further detailing the methodology and the evaluation design matrix, the labour division and the tools to be used.
- **Draft report and revisions:** The evaluation team will prepare a draft report ('zero' draft) for review by the Evaluation Office and make appropriate revisions to the report. The revised report ('first' draft) will then be submitted to the regional bureau and regional service centre for comments. The team will make any factual corrections as required and revise the draft based on comments provided ('second' draft).
- **Final evaluation report:** The evaluation team will submit to the Evaluation Office its final report, after reflecting all comments provided by the Evaluation Office, the regional bureau, and the regional service centre. The report will be written in accordance with the format and style as instructed by the Evaluation Office.

- Presentations to the regional bureau, the regional centre, and to the Executive Board members and an evaluation brief, to be used for reporting to the Executive Board and for publicity materials.

The main text of the evaluation report will be a maximum of 50 pages, excluding annexes, organized into the chapters and supplemented by annexes as follows. It should follow the report style format and guidelines to be provided by the Evaluation Office.

Chapter 1: Introduction, presenting the report and the methodology used

Chapter 2: Regional context

Chapter 3: UNDP's regional programme

Chapter 4: Contributions of UNDP's regional programme (by programme area) and Strategic positioning of UNDP's regional programme

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Annex 2: List of people consulted

Annex 3: List of documents consulted

ANNEX 2.

PEOPLE CONSULTED

Countries	UNDP	Stakeholders
Antigua & Barbuda		
Argentina	X	X
Aruba		
Bahamas		
Barbados	X	X
Belize	X	
Bolivia	X	X
Brazil	X	X
Cayman Islands		
Chile	X	
Colombia	X	
Costa Rica	X	X
Cuba	X	X
Dominica		
Dominican Republic	X	X
Ecuador	X	
El Salvador	X	X
French Guyana		
Grenada		
Guadelupe		
Guyana	X	X
Guatemala	X	X
Haiti	X	
Honduras	X	
Jamaica	X	
Martinique		
Mexico	X	X
Nicaragua	X	
Panama	X	X
Paraguay	X	
Peru	X	X
Puerto Rico		
Saint Barthélemy		
St. Kitts & Nevis		
St. Lucia		X

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Countries	UNDP	Stakeholders
St. Vincent and the Grenadines		
Suriname	X	
Trinidad and Tobago	X	
Turks & Caicos Islands		
Uruguay	X	X
Venezuela	X	X
Virgin Islands		

ARGENTINA

Balzano, Andrea, Gender Focal Point,
UNDP Argentina

Clarembaux, Celeste, Project Officer, UNDP/
Arg/1/016, Government of Argentina

Codutti, Raúl, Minister of Planning and
Environment, Government of the
Province of Chaco

Colazo, Carmen, Consultant, UNDP Argentina

Cristina Perceval, Maria, Undersecretary for
Promotion of Human Rights, Ministry of
Justice, Security and Human Rights

Daverio, Andrea, Consultant, RSC, Argentina

Garcia, Virginia, Institutional Communication
Unit, UNDP Argentina

Irizar, Manuel, Programmes - Inclusive
Development Area, UNDP Argentina

Laura Rodríguez Gustá, Ana, Consultant,
UNDP Argentina

Massolo, Alejandra, Consultant,
UNDP Argentina

Mesa, Pablo, Director, National Environmental
Management and Biodiversity
Conservation,

Onestini, María, Local Government,
UNDP Argentina

Pallaros, Ulises, Project Coordinator, UNDP/
Arg/1/016, Government of Argentina

Picolotti, Dra. Romina, Secretary, Environment
and Sustainable Development, Government
of Argentina

Respighi, Emiliomo, Director, Civil Protection,
Government of Argentina

Rodríguez, Corina, Consultant,
UNDP Argentina

Santiago, Martin, Resident Representative,
UNDP Argentina

Tomasini, Daniel, Programme Officer
and Environment Coordinator,
UNDP Argentina

BARBADOS

Caddle, Marsha, Poverty Reduction Programme
Manager, UNDP Barbados

Gyles-McDonnough, Michelle, Resident
Representative, UNDP Barbados

King, Ian, Disaster Risk Management Specialist,
UNDP Barbados

Murray, Reynold, former Environment
Specialist, UNDP Barbados

Wilson, Ricky, current Environment Specialist,
UNDP Barbados

BELIZE

Alemu, Daniel, Assistant Resident
Representative, UNDP Belize

Aragón, Eladio, Police Assistant

Banner, Ernest, Coordinator, Rural
Development, Ministry of Labour, Local
Government and Rural Development and
National Emergency Management

Castellanos, Eric, President for Collaborative
Network of PHIV (C-Net+)

Coombs, Jay, Programme Analyst, Poverty
Reduction and MDGs, UNDP Belize

Cuellar, Martin, Executive Director of the National AIDS Commission

Garcia, Jeanette, Economist Officer for MDG Coordination, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Lopez, Hibert, National Coordinator, Rural Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development and National Emergency Management

Magaña, Asad, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, UNDP Belize

Mansur, Mariana, Programme Officer and Focal Point, HIV/AIDS, UNDP Belize

Wade, Diane Marie, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Belize

Wade-Moore, Diane, Programme Analyst, Sustainable Development and Crisis Prevention Team, UNDP Belize

BOLIVIA

Aranibar Arze, Antonio, Executive Director, PAPEP Project, UNDP Bolivia

Cardozo Arnez, Juan Pablo, Vice Minister of Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Sustainable Forest Management, Government of Bolivia

Chain, Rocio, Programme Officer, Environment, UNDP Bolivia

Choque, María, Gender Focal Point, UNDP Bolivia

Nunez, Juan Pablo, Environment Specialist, Government of Bolivia

Ortuño, Armando, UNDP Bolivia

Rivas, Flavio, Vice Minister of Planning and Coordination, Government of Bolivia

Romero, Carlos, Minister of Presidency, Regional Service Centre, Bolivia

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ANNEX 4.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

TO THE EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2008-2013

CONTEXT, BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

The Evaluation Office, as part of its annual work plan approved by the Executive Board, conducted evaluations of the five regional programmes in 2012. For the Latin America and the Caribbean region, this was its second independent evaluation, covering the programme period 2008-2013. The evaluation assessed UNDP programme performance guided by the results and resources framework of the regional programme document. Its objectives were to facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and institutional levels, and to provide stakeholders in regional programme countries and development partners with an objective assessment of the contributions made by the regional programme.

The evaluation analysed the contributions of the regional programme to development results during the programme period and the strategic positioning of UNDP in the region. The results of the evaluation, including a set of forward-looking recommendations, are intended to feed directly into the development of the new regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean to start in 2014.

The evaluation found that the regional programme has proved relevant and effective in terms of contributions made in the region, generation of knowledge, positioning for South-South

cooperation and mobilization of resources for country offices. In particular, the evaluation pointed out the following:

- (a) The regional programme has made an appropriate contribution to national development in the region;
- (b) The results were more effective and sustainable when the regional programme was able to engage governments and other partners to share ownership of interventions;
- (c) The regional programme has a recognized ability to leverage and mobilize resources for country offices and other partners and stakeholders;
- (d) The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation and the development of South-South solutions, disseminate best practices, and link countries; and
- (e) Significant knowledge has been created and there have been considerable improvements in the accessibility, usability, coverage and reach of that knowledge.

The evaluation of the regional programme identified challenges and made specific recommendations that are addressed in the present management response. Given that some findings and conclusions have broader implications, they will be addressed in the context of the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

ANNEX. Key recommendations and management response

Evaluation recommendation 1. The regional programme needs to focus on fewer and more realistic thematic priorities and more strictly prioritize initiatives in which UNDP brings a regional added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic partners able to support countries and, when and if appropriate, regional institutions, in taking ownership to ensure the continuity and sustainability of results.

Management response. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean fully agrees with this recommendation. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be aligned with the new UNDP Strategic Plan. Global and regional programming will directly address country needs. The programme will focus on a limited number of strategic issues related to sustainable development and resilience and will be tailored to key areas according to the specific demands of country offices in the region. Some related actions have already been initiated with regard to new country office business models that will ensure focus and sustainability, as well as optimal positioning and team structure; alignment of new regional programme with country office priorities and planned annual strategic key results; and strengthened technical assistance.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Increased consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including country offices, governments, regional institutions, civil society, United Nations organizations and donors, leading to a regional programme based on demand-driven priorities.	2014	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
1.2 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme by fostering synergies between global, regional and country programmes to ensure more targeted responses and a complementary approach.	2013-2017	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
1.3 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme by focusing on fewer thematic priorities and more flexible demand-driven actions in the context of the post-'Rio+20' and post-2015 development agendas.	2013-2014	UNDP/RBLAC		

Evaluation recommendation 2. The regional programme should be less involved in project implementation and should invest its limited resources in upstream initiatives such as: policy and technical advice; advocacy; dialogue; partnership building; multistakeholder coordination; networking; knowledge brokering; and capacity development.

Management response: Largely relevant and acceptable. The main emphasis will be placed on increasing policy and technical advice, capacity development, knowledge brokering, coordination and partnership building. However, regional programme activities will also include project implementation when the supported initiatives are replicable; can be scaled up and/or support policy making and advocacy; have strong potential for transformational change; and complement the support provided at the country level. In addition to policy advice and technical support, the regional service centre provides operational support to country offices. The regional programme will retain its versatility and flexibility to support the differentiated needs of countries in the region.

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Elaboration of an inventory of policy and technical services to be provided at the regional level.	2014-2017 (biannual)	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
2.2. Establishment of an assessment mechanism to define the most effective implementation modalities based on their potential to contribute to development changes, and in full alignment with national or regional demands, through consultation with key actors and institutions.	2014	UNDP/RBLAC		
2.3 Establishment of a comprehensive partnership strategy, with key partners consulted.	2014-2017	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC, in coordination with BDP, BCPR and BERA		
Evaluation recommendation 3. UNDP should rethink its approach to the Caribbean and should develop a new development cooperation strategy, with an adequate resource mobilization plan, to allow UNDP to tackle the specific challenges, needs, priorities and opportunities of the Caribbean countries and the different development status and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, net contributor countries and middle-income countries.				
Management response. Largely relevant and acceptable, response initiated. UNDP has been rethinking its approach to the Caribbean, and support to the subregion is a top priority for RBLAC. UNDP is engaged in ongoing dialogue with the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats. UNDP and the United Nations development system as a whole have established the following areas of collaboration: climate change and the environment, institutional strengthening, and human security. UNDP and the United Nations system in Latin America and the Caribbean will support the consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and the subregional consultations in preparation for the upcoming SIDS conference in 2014.				
3.1 Analytical review of the Caribbean portfolio to determine optimal programmatic presence, financial sustainability and team structure	2013, 2015, 2017	UNDP/RBLAC		
3.2 Capacities of the RSC to be strengthened in order to provide technical advice and operational support to country offices in the Caribbean so as to ensure optimal presence of UNDP in the light of the specific needs of the subregion	2013-2014	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
3.3 Dedicated unit in RBLAC strengthened to provide services and support to country offices in the Caribbean.	2013 -2017	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
3.4 Support and collaboration to CARICOM and OECS in preparation for the upcoming SIDS conference and post-2015 consultations	2013 -2015	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
3.5 Development of a resource mobilization strategy for the Caribbean	2013 (ongoing)	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
Evaluation recommendation 4. Mainstreaming strategies for cross-cutting areas should be reviewed.				
Management response. Largely relevant and acceptable (this recommendation focuses mainly on gender and HIV/AIDS). To fully address gender mainstreaming in a systematic manner, RBLAC will promote its integration starting from the planning phases of all programmes, and will establish effective accountability mechanisms for that purpose.				

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.1 A specific outcome in the regional programme that captures the dimensions of the global inter-organization agreements on UNDP and HIV/AIDS to be included in the regional programme results framework.	2013 (to be implemented 2014-2017)	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
4.2 A comprehensive strategy and an operational plan for gender mainstreaming will be developed to align the regional programme with the UNDP gender equality strategy.	2013 (to be implemented 2014-2017)	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
Evaluation recommendation 5. UNDP should rethink how the regional programme can more strategically and realistically support triangular and South-South cooperation and measure the concrete effects and sustainability of those initiatives in a more systematic manner.				
Management response: Largely relevant and acceptable. Strengthening triangular and South-South cooperation in the region is one of the pillars of UNDP programming in Latin America and the Caribbean and this will continue in the new regional programme. RBLAC considers South-South cooperation as a way to innovate through exchanges of experiences that permit learning and knowledge-sharing among countries in the region. South-South cooperation is a strategic element that will involve all regional programme areas, including the intra- and interregional dimensions.				
5.1 Develop further the operational aspects and scope of existing and new South-South cooperation frameworks in Latin America and the Caribbean.	2014	UNDP/RBLAC in coordination with BDP and other bureaux		
5.2 Develop regional service centre capacity to act as service broker between demand for and supply of expertise in the region in the context of South-South cooperation frameworks.	2014	UNDP/RBLAC		
Evaluation recommendation 6. UNDP should rethink how the cross-cutting areas can best support the core practice areas, increasing synergies and more thoroughly integrating planning, monitoring and learning from evaluations into knowledge management, capacity development, South-South solutions and communication, in a more structured and focused environment, to bring about a combined perspective for action, accountability and learning.				
Management response. Largely relevant and acceptable. Response has been initiated through the improvement of standard knowledge management products and activities, and enhanced support to country offices. The knowledge management strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to contribute to policy making and institutional reforms.				
6.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014-2017, and subsequent programming.	2013-2017	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		
6.2 Design and implement standards for knowledge management strategies, activities and products to support learning for behavioural and institutional change.	2014-2017	UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC		



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