



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

EVALUATION

OF THE ROLE OF UNDP IN SUPPORTING
NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme



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FOREWORD

The year 2015—recently proclaimed the “year of evaluation” by the General Assembly—is also the finish line for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since their birth in year 2000, when they were proposed as part of the declaration emanating from the Millennium Summit, the MDGs have grown to represent a global frame of reference for development support, meant to focus attention and resources onto clear priorities. The effort to establish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) builds on the momentum of the MDGs. As the United Nations embarks on this next global goal-setting effort, it is important that we consider and learn from past experience. It is in this spirit that we provide this evaluation of UNDP support to MDG achievement at country level.

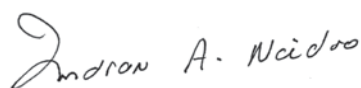
In 2001, the Secretary-General of the United Nations entrusted UNDP with a lead role to facilitate country-level monitoring of the MDGs and to campaign for the Goals on behalf of the United Nations. Since then, the MDGs have shaped the UNDP programming framework to a considerable extent, with consistent investment to monitor progress against MDG targets at the national and regional levels, to raise awareness and stakeholder buy-in through campaigns and MDG reports, to support the incorporation of the Goals in national development strategies and to help countries meet particular Goals.

The evaluation found that UNDP has generally delivered quality products and services to help translate the Goals into clear development results at the country level. As can be expected, implementation at country level varied in scope and quality. Key performance factors include: national ownership of the MDG agenda; national capacity for planning and statistics; presence or absence of disasters and crises; strength of UNDP’s leadership in country; and last but not least, availability of domestic and/or foreign resources.

The evaluation highlights a number of issues. One is that UNDP sometimes supported MDG-based planning processes that were lacking realistic means of implementation, e.g. without an identified funding source. Such overly-optimistic planning undermined the credibility of the MDG agenda in some countries, and raised expectations that UNDP was unable to fulfil. UNDP’s insufficient internal monitoring of its own support programmes also merits improvement. Moreover, the technical knowledge, expertise and mandates of other UN agencies and funds could have been leveraged by UNDP to a greater extent during the MDG era. More coordination among UN agencies will be required to effectively support the highly technical post-2015 agenda.

Indeed, the SDGs are shaping up as markedly more complex than the MDGs. They will require a quantum leap in the capacity of developing nations and their development partners to collaborate in joint programmes and measure progress. UNDP appears well placed to champion, monitor and support the SDG agenda as a whole. However, the organization will need to clearly articulate its value-added proposition. As compared to 15 years ago, many more agencies are now lobbying for larger roles and greater visibility in support of the global development agenda.

I hope that the conclusions and recommendations from this evaluation will help enhance UNDP’s contribution to the achievement of the next global development agenda and provide broader lessons that may be of relevance to all stakeholders. The world still needs a global partnership for development, and as the findings from the present evaluation show, UNDP can help.



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Director
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Assessments of Development Results
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART Global Initiative	Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Cooperation Networks for Human Development
AUC	African Union Commission
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP
BRSP	Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships, UNDP
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCS	Country case study
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (Colombia)
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
G-77	Group of 77 (a coalition of developing nations)
G8	Group of Eight (a governmental forum of the seven largest economies in the world, plus Russia at the time)
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IDGs	International Development Goals
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG+ or MDG Plus	Refers to countries which adopted national MDG targets that are more ambitious than the globally agreed ones
MDG-F	MDG Achievement Fund
NDS	National development strategies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHDR	National Human Development Report
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nation Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNH4+	United Nations Health 4+ (currently UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, World Bank and UNAIDS)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now called 'UN-Women')
UNMC	UN Millennium Campaign
UNMP	UN Millennium Project
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Social Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000, and associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute an internationally agreed set of quantifiable and time-bound goals to advance human development at the national and global levels. The Goals have shaped the UNDP programming framework to a considerable extent since 2000. Monitoring progress against their targets at national and regional levels through periodic reports has been a constant area of work over the period. In other areas of work, the extent of UNDP engagement has evolved over time. While the organization was initially focused on raising awareness and ensuring stakeholder buy-in for the Goals through a series of campaigns, after 2005 its focus moved to supporting the incorporation and mainstreaming of the Goals in national development strategies, including through estimating the cost of achieving them in specific countries, preparing macro-economic frameworks that were consistent with the Goals or aligning poverty reduction strategies (PRs) with them. Since 2010, UNDP has concentrated on directly supporting specific countries to close gaps in meeting particular Goals through the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework (MAF).

At its second regular session of 2013, the Executive Board agreed that the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) would carry out a thematic evaluation of the “role of UNDP in supporting national achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.” The Board noted the high strategic importance of the Goals and the potential to extract lessons learned for the post-2015 global development agenda. The evaluation was carried out within the overall provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are: (a) to assess the roles played and results achieved by UNDP in support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; (b) to identify the factors that have affected the contribution and performance of UNDP in supporting the achievement of the Goals: strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities, which decisions, strategies and approaches have worked and which ones have not; and (c) based on the above, to provide strategic recommendations for fine tuning the institutional strategy of support to the post-2015 agenda.

The following ‘roles’ or aspects of UNDP work are covered by this evaluation:

- Millennium Development Goal ‘champion’ (Millennium Campaign and other advocacy and influencing efforts);
- Millennium Development Goal ‘score-keeper’: country and regional Millennium Development Goal reports (MDGRs), the ‘MDG Monitor’ website and support to the MDG Gap Task Force;
- Technical assistance and policy support to develop and scale up Goal-based development strategies and plans at the national, subnational and sector levels, including the MAF;
- UNDP mechanisms to prioritize the Millennium Development Goals (trust funds, regional initiatives, implementation and monitoring and other institutional mechanisms, including the joint Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund);
- Relevant country programmes and projects in support of efforts to monitor and achieve the full set of Millennium Development Goals.

The evaluation looked at the support provided by UNDP to the Millennium Development Goal agenda as a whole. Therefore, activities in support of one particular Goal or sector (e.g. environment projects such as the MDG Carbon Facility) were excluded from the scope. As a result, the present evaluation may under-evaluate the UNDP contribution to achievement of the Goals at the country level. Including sectoral projects within the evaluation scope would have amounted to evaluating almost everything that UNDP does.

The evaluation focused on both the upstream level, attempting to measure the impact of policy advice, advocacy, awareness-raising and monitoring of progress, and on the downstream level by reviewing localization of the Goals at the sub-national level. Likewise, some of the initiatives supported by the MAF and by the Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund focus on the upstream level, while others support subnational processes. The evaluation scope does not include the Millennium Villages as it was thought their assessment would require greater resources and time than were available. However, it occasionally drew on the findings of IEO-led Assessments of Development Results (ADRs, i.e. country programme evaluations) on the Millennium Villages, when reviewing the overall strategic positioning of UNDP.

The evaluation relied on multiple data collection tools for analysis, validation and triangulation of evidence against the evaluation questions, including: semi-structured interviews with key informants; 11 country case studies for in-depth information on outcomes at the country level; a synthesis of evidence from prior ADRs and global, regional and outcome evaluations; a meta-analysis of 70 UNDP country programmes covered by a recent ADR or by one of the 11 country case studies commissioned as part of the present evaluation; a desk review of national development strategies (NDS) in 50 countries; a questionnaire survey targeted at UNDP staff and consultants; and a critical analysis of the guidance notes issued by UNDP headquarters on the Goals.

FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC ROLES AND PRODUCTS

CAMPAIGNING

Campaigning was most relevant in societies with a vibrant civil society. Through varied channels, e.g. the United Nations Millennium Campaign combined with Country Offices' own campaigning efforts and country MDGRs, UNDP has effectively ensured that the Goals were kept at the centre of the global, and in some cases national, development debate. However, the Millennium Campaign itself was targeted at a small number of countries. Its geographic coverage was therefore quite narrow and did not tap into the strong campaigning energy that appeared to have existed behind the Goals in Latin America. Among the Millennium Campaign's global initiatives, the Stand Up and Take Action against Poverty campaign had a large outreach to raise awareness of the Goals but lacked a clear link to policy outcomes.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The country MDGRs, which UNDP supported in all programme countries, were relevant in most settings as reminders of governmental commitments and by providing a clear measure of progress. An estimated 450 reports were produced worldwide over the evaluated period.

National MDGRs played an important role in promoting the Goals, assessing progress towards them, contributing to a national debate on development and at times highlighting a development issue that had tended previously to be ignored or not monitored. The reports were regularly picked up by the media, in which they tended to be viewed as 'safe' to discuss, quotable and carrying legitimacy. The reports have also been used to inform development planning.

The general quality of the reports has improved over time, as evidenced by the country case studies conducted for this evaluation, but many gaps remain in the data and there are significant issues in terms of the quality of the data.

Initially, the reports used a scorecard format but gradually became more academic and lengthy. This tendency may at times have gone beyond what should be required of an MDGR. Some countries have produced MDGRs almost on an annual basis, and more frequently than new relevant data was being made available through periodic surveys and censuses.

The UNDP contribution to Millennium Development Goal reporting at the regional and global levels was more modest than at the country level, but nevertheless was found to be appropriate and useful.

The broader support of UNDP for collection and analysis of data on development is relevant when it helps to fill a gap in development monitoring, and also in cases where data exist at the level of line ministries but are not well centralized by one central statistical office. UNDP support to statistical capacity and the MDGRs has led to improvements in the quality of Goal-related data and contributed to a more data-friendly environment. However, development data remain rare, scattered, costly to collect and politically sensitive. Much remains to be done, especially if the new sustainable development goal (SDG) targets are to be monitored transparently after 2015.

MDG PLANNING AT NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS

Support to planning and costing was most relevant in countries with a strong planning culture and apparatus. Planning at the subnational level was more relevant in middle-income countries with lagging geographical pockets and also in countries with a strong decentralization policy.

The evaluation estimates that over 80 percent of UNDP programme countries have adopted a subset or the totality of the Millennium Development Goals in one or more of their development plans. The Goals have been used in national development policies and plans in different ways: as general, consensual objectives; as planned and monitored targets; or purely as a quote or

reference. ‘Referential use’ of the Goals in plans and strategies, while initially frequent, tended to give way over time to more ‘programmatic use’ of the targets as planning and monitoring devices. However, not all Goals were equally likely to be included in national development strategies, with gender equality targets beyond primary education being the least used.

A detailed meta-analysis of 70 UNDP country programmes covered by a recent ADR or by one of the 11 country case studies commissioned as part of the present evaluation indicates that UNDP supported the integration of the Goals in national development strategies in 42 countries (60 percent of 70 sampled programme countries), out of which the support led to some implementation at national and/or subnational levels in 22 countries (i.e. approximately half of the 42 countries in which UNDP provided support). This is lower than the target set in the relevant UNDP project document (which envisaged that “three-fourths of the support provided has been operationalized”).

In the same meta-analysis, UNDP was found to have supported a subnational planning process aligned to the Goals in at least 28 of 70 sampled countries, which suggests that UNDP supported such subnational planning in approximately 40 percent of its programme countries. However, the support led to clear follow-up and implementation of the designed subnational plans in only six (or approximately one in five) of these 28 countries.

Subnational plans that were aligned with the Millennium Development Goals thanks to UNDP support tended to remain unfunded in poor countries that are dependent on official development assistance (ODA) but were often well-endowed in middle-income countries that funded them out of their national budgets.

Depending on the country, reasons for non-implementation of the drafted plans appeared to include a wide variety of contextual factors such as eruption of crisis, lack of sustained political will over

the long term, poor financing and relations with donors, corruption and lack of a strong planning culture. The first reason listed above, eruption of crisis, concerns half of the countries in the sample that had no or weak follow-up to their national Millennium Development Goal planning.

However, the non-implementation of Millennium Development Goal-based plans was compounded by factors within the control of UNDP. On a number of occasions, UNDP supported planning processes without taking into sufficient consideration the means of implementation that could realistically be made available. One case in point is the Millennium Development Goal planning exercises at the subnational level undertaken by UNDP in 2004–2006 in many countries with the help of the United Nations Volunteers programme, which were not linked to any clear funding prospect or mechanism and resulted in raising expectations that could not be met. Plans to cooperate with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on a more ambitious programme of support to local governments did not materialize. In the decentralized planning area, there was apparently more fruitful collaboration with the ART Global Initiative (Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Cooperation Networks for Human Development), notably in Latin America.

Some of the reviewed subnational initiatives may have implicitly buttressed a peace consolidation agenda by shoring up service delivery, and thus the presence of the State, in regions with a history of insurgency against the State that are now engaged in a negotiated peace process. Poor and deprived regions often coincide with unstable, insecure, hard-to-reach areas, and therefore it should not come as a surprise if some support projects at the subnational level focus on areas that are to one degree or another remote, marginal or insecure.

MDG ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK

The MAF, developed by UNDP during preparations to the 2010 United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (20–22

September 2010) and endorsed by the United Nations Development Group in December 2010, is potentially relevant anywhere. Using the results-based management feature of the Goals, the MAF can help any country to identify lagging indicators and bottlenecks to achieving the Goals, and has already been used in an ‘MDG+’ context (i.e. countries where the targets were made more ambitious than the globally agreed ones). To date, 59 programme countries have initiated a MAF.

However, UNDP is not the only United Nations organization to have developed such a tool. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization in particular have developed similar diagnostic tools, notably on maternal health, a lagging area in many countries. These other tools are sectoral in nature, while the comparative value of the MAF lies in its balancing of cross-sectoral and sectoral actions, focusing the fragmented efforts and resources of various actors and potentially engaging the entire United Nations country team (UNCT). In practice however, the MAF was often perceived as a UNDP-driven product and process.

In a few middle-income countries with a decentralized governance policy, MAFs were widely replicated with national resources. However, in low-income countries, the funding upon which the utility of the MAF is contingent was often slow to materialize. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provided an effective forum to showcase the MAF process as applied in varied countries and to mobilize support from the United Nations and the World Bank to the concerned action plans.

FINDINGS BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

RELEVANCE

The relevance of the work of UNDP related to the Millennium Development Goals depended upon the relevance of the Goals themselves to a country’s development context. The Goals call for the fulfilment of the most basic human

needs, which made them most relevant for Low-income countries. Middle-income countries that had already achieved most of the targets at the national level have tended to consider them most relevant when applied at the local level, to highlight areas of deprivation. Thus, there was initially more interest in the Goals in Africa and Asia and the Pacific than in the Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Latin America and Caribbean regions. Competing agendas and priorities influenced relevance in certain countries, such as in small island developing states or countries experiencing crises.

The country level was of obvious significance in operationalizing the Millennium Development Goals. Country programmes accounted for about 80 percent of the estimated US\$1.3 billion UNDP spent on initiatives under the scope of the present evaluation, to help governments translate the Goals into pro-poor strategies, policies and programmes. UNDP country leadership proved to be a major factor affecting performance at the national level.

The UNDP structure of regional bureaux and Country Offices helped to enhance the relevance of UNDP support by adapting the organization's offer of services and products to the diverse contexts in which it works. However, at times the vigorous rollout by UNDP of a variety of tools led to some being tried in contexts where they had limited relevance. Each tool had its own domain of relevance depending on the characteristics of each country.

EFFICIENCY

Overall, the various areas of the UNDP Millennium Development Goals programme were found to be well designed, coherent and mutually reinforcing (e.g. the MDGRs feeding into campaigning and programming). One problematic exception to this coherent offer of services concerns the various trust funds set up by UNDP to finance related activities, which were often disconnected from the mainstay of UNDP work related to the Goals. Admittedly,

the more recent funds are better connected, such as the joint Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund. Its governance mechanism enables the funded projects to be aligned with the overall UNDP Millennium Development Goals programmes in country and globally. Some earlier funds and initiatives, including the Millennium Campaign or the Millennium Villages, were set up and operated at arm's length from the regular UNDP structure, without a clear demonstrated advantage.

UNDP was able to quickly push its Millennium Development Goals programmes and tools down to the country level through its Country Office network, but was less efficient in learning from the experiences of its Country Offices and national partners. There were intermittent attempts at capturing lessons, often in preparation of major global or regional conferences, but the present evaluation did not find much in terms of systematic monitoring of outputs, let alone of successes and failures at the outcome level. For instance, the website listing all MDGRs was found to be incomplete. The data from the national MDGRs was never compiled in a central database. A website created in 2007 by UNDP in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNICEF and Relief Web to be "a one-stop-shop for information on progress towards the MDGs, globally and at the country level" called the 'MDG Monitor' was never updated after the initial launch. This finding about the lack of systematic central monitoring of country-level processes echoes a recent performance audit of UNDP monitoring practices (Office of Audit and Investigations Report No. 1397, February 2015).

PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP played a largely facilitative role in supporting national planning, but the determining factor was in all cases the concerned government's pre-existing social development and anti-poverty priorities, and how well these priorities resonated with the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, a lack of domestic and/or external funding evidently

imposes limits on the extent to which national partners can implement Goal-based plans. The staff survey conducted for this evaluation confirms this diagnostic. Most respondents (85 percent) selected high national ownership or commitment to the Goals as positively influencing the effectiveness of UNDP, followed by the availability of national resources (73 percent).

In cases where domestic resources were lacking, the capacity of UNDP to reach out to donors was of critical importance. In this context, the need for the United Nations system to closely work with Bretton Woods institutions, notably the World Bank, was confirmed by the evaluation's finding at the country level and at headquarters with the CEB reviews of the MAF.

The UNDP relation with the specialized agencies was both strengthened and tested by the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals helped the United Nations and UNDP to recapture some of the policy space previously lost to structural adjustment and a growth-centric view of development. However, the holistic, cross-sectoral nature of the Goals implies a tension with the sectoral agendas of specialized agencies, which often considered the Goals as simplistic. The involvement of other United Nations agencies in the preparation of country MDGRs and MAFs was useful to peer review the MDGRs and to ensure that MAF action plans brought together stand-alone activities and benefited from sound technical inputs, although this involvement of other agencies was often found to be weaker than recommended in the relevant guideline documents.

Efforts to support Millennium Development Goal planning at the subnational level suffered from a weak partnership with UNCDF. The MAF filled this gap to some extent by shaping resource allocation, particularly in states with significant domestic resources, with modest UNDP technical assistance.

UNDP partnered well with civil society organizations (CSOs) in democratic, open societies. Not too surprisingly, the engagement with CSOs

was often perfunctory in less open political contexts. Relations with the media and the private sector were found to be minimal.

EFFECTIVENESS

UNDP had a positive normative influence on development policy by helping to conceptualize the Millennium Development Goals at their onset, by mobilizing support behind them, and through its global strategy for their implementation. This established a wide consensus and a common basis on which to work. Together with the work of the World Bank, the thought leadership of UNDP and the United Nations Millennium Project helped to make the case for a significant increase in ODA in countries that can absorb it.

UNDP helped to align a generation of national plans and development strategies with the Millennium Development Goals, including numerous PRSs, some of which led to debt relief and/or additional funding from donors. Over and beyond PRSs, Millennium Development Goal-based national planning has been attempted in many countries but did not systematically translate into significant implementation. The evaluation identified several internal and external factors that seem to determine the utility and ultimate impact of UNDP work in this area. National ownership of the agenda, political commitment and stability are paramount. In some countries, the eruption of natural, political or economic crises rendered the Millennium Development Goal agenda obsolete or secondary in comparison with immediate national priorities, and imposed a strong cost on achievement of the Goals and other social outcomes.

UNDP supported a wide range of governments in monitoring the Goals at the national and subnational levels. As a result, even in countries where national partners did not conduct any form of Goal-based planning, work by UNDP to monitor the Goals often had a positive impact on the national capacity to collect and generate data on development outcomes.

The Millennium Development Goals themselves are generally seen as a success. They have improved the targeting and flow of aid and other investments, and presided over an era of increase in ODA levels. Their degree of achievement has been uneven, with persistently large inequalities between and within nations. Increased donor commitments to health and education were recorded after 2000. However, it is difficult to establish a cause-and-effect relationship since several independent initiatives in health and education have occurred before or in parallel with the Goals that have overlapping objectives. In particular, it is intrinsically difficult to distinguish the impact of the Millennium Development Goal framework from the impact of the strands of thinking that helped create the Goals in the first place (e.g. the '20:20 Initiative' that stemmed from the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, or Education For All). The Millennium Development Goals might best be viewed as reinforcing rather than driving the targeting of resources.

However, the Goals sometimes lent themselves to a 'drive for numbers' at the expense of quality and to an excessive preoccupation with readily measurable outcomes at the expense of areas that are harder to measure. The Goals may have resulted in a lower quality of social services in some countries when they expanded rapidly during the period, notably in primary education. A related concern is that the particular focus of the Millennium Development Goals on certain diseases has led to the emergence of strongly-focused global funding initiatives for specific health measures and diseases (e.g. the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), which de-emphasized systemic support to health systems and capabilities. From this point of view, the Millennium Development Goal framework may have encouraged a focus on 'quick gains' and immediate health priorities at the expense of strengthening the competence of public health institutions to tackle new, emerging health threats, such as the current Ebola crisis in West Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: The basic concept of the Millennium Development Goals as well as the strategy and tools for United Nations support envisaged at the onset of the period by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, his office and the UNDP leadership have been largely validated by experience, as evidenced by the wide adoption of the Goals in national plans; the contribution of monitoring to maintaining interest; or the higher degree of collaboration observed at the global and country levels between United Nations agencies and international financial institutions.

The fact that many countries, groups and individuals were keen to take part in the conversation about the post-2015 set of goals and targets that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals is a tribute to the value of the Goals themselves. There is wide agreement among development actors that there is a need for a global development agenda such as the Millennium Development Goals, and therefore that the Goals cannot be allowed to expire without being replaced by a new framework.

Conclusion 2: UNDP has designed and rolled out an impressive set of diverse and complementary tools in support of Millennium Development Goal planning, monitoring and implementation. Generally speaking, the guidelines and products reviewed were of high quality and well timed. As can be expected, implementation in the field varied greatly in scope and quality.

Maintaining commitment to the Millennium Development Goals agenda throughout the period proved a challenge. Within UNDP, the momentum was slow to build with the initial four to five years of the 'MDG era' essentially devoted to campaigning and research. Momentum has also slowed somewhat in the last several years with the combined effects of the preparation for post-2015 discussions and the institutional restructuring of UNDP.

Conclusion 3: The successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals required consensus and collaboration among all development actors, including among United Nations agencies. However, in its support for the Goals at country level, UNDP could have used the expertise of the specialized agencies to a greater extent. Their limited involvement emerged as a weakness in the preparation of national MDGRs, in the elaboration of the MAF and in efforts to localize the Goals.

The MAF in many countries is perceived as a UNDP-led endeavour and product, despite the tool having been reviewed and endorsed by UNDG. Yet the most successful MAFs in the sample (e.g. Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia) were those being supported by a broader group of stakeholders, including of course the concerned government, but also the relevant technical UN agencies as well as international development banks. This practice brought about a measure of technical soundness and a critical mass of support and funding, which was reinforced by mechanisms such as the CEB reviews of MAFs at headquarters. Similarly, the involvement of UN specialized agencies in MDGRs is critical to screening the reported data and interpreting it correctly in their area of specialisation.

Working with others evidently takes more time, is more complex and can be more frustrating than working alone. Yet the Millennium Development Goals were conceived as a United Nations-wide project and their successful implementation requires consensus and collaboration among development stakeholders, including United Nations agencies. This issue is not entirely the fault of any one UN agency, but UNDP is responsible for UN coordination in country and thus bears a unique responsibility compared to other agencies.

Conclusion 4: UNDP has often failed to translate its support into tangible development programmes and funding streams. More than half of the reviewed planning initiatives related to the Millennium Development Goals at the

national or local levels remained unfunded at the time of the evaluation. Something is amiss when there is excessive attention to planning at the expense of thinking through means of implementation in a realistic manner.

Planning without taking into account means of implementation is poor planning at best, and at worst amounts to tokenism. Such tokenistic Goal-related planning potentially undermined the credibility of the Millennium Development Goal agenda, and locally it raised expectations of financial assistance which UNDP was unable to fulfil.

UNDP depends on its partnership with governments and donors to translate any international agenda into reality at the local level. Making this partnership work in a realistic manner was the key to success during the Millennium Development Goal era. The increased collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations in country and at the level of the CEB augurs well for the new agenda. Partnerships with the private sector, which were weak during the Goals' era, will now be essential for success.

Conclusion 5: Where and when resources were available and used judiciously, some countries' drive to implement the Millennium Development Goal agenda through ambitious policies translated into a significant expansion of social services at field level, proving that aligning national development strategies with the Goals can contribute to their achievement even in the poorest countries. These successes led to further challenges, such as a deterioration in the quality of education outcomes that was clearly linked in some countries to a rapid expansion in primary school coverage.

Beyond mere access, cost and quality of service are shaping up as major issues. Historically, service outreach efforts have naturally tended to focus on the easiest communities to access, and expanding coverage therefore leads to rising marginal costs to reach additional citizens (the 'last mile' problem). Similarly, rapid expansion of

services has been associated with a deterioration in the quality of service in some countries. Educational outcomes in particular have declined in a number of countries reviewed in this evaluation as a direct result of efforts to provide universal primary education.

Conclusion 6: UNDP is well positioned to approach the post-2015 era and help countries achieve the SDGs, but the emerging post-2015 agenda is significantly more comprehensive and complex than the Millennium Development Goal targets, and it will undoubtedly test the capacity of the United Nations to ‘deliver as one’. Approaches similar to the MAF and national adaptation of the Goals will be increasingly required during the SDG era, in order to translate the all-encompassing SDG agenda into strong priorities at the local level.

While the post-2015 agenda still needs to be negotiated, agreed to by governments and adopted by the General Assembly, enough is currently known to draw some conclusions. The SDG agenda will be much broader in terms of what is included, which will cover the unfinished basic human needs goals of the Millennium Development Goals but also other dimensions of a broader sustainable development agenda (e.g. inequality, inclusive economic growth, urbanization, ecological sustainability), as well as the governance agenda (e.g. human rights, access to justice and rule of law, peace and conflict). This means a much longer list of goals, targets and indicators. In theory, a larger number of countries will find elements of the agenda relevant to their development needs, but to translate the lengthier SDG agenda into clear, measurable pro-poor outcomes at the country level will represent a serious challenge, requiring a quantum leap in terms of implementation and statistical capacity and costs, and thus a greater sense of focus than was called for by the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, monitoring of human rights and governance is fundamentally more political and requires a greater independence from governments than the monitoring of basic needs like

access to water, health and education. As such, monitoring the SDGs will test the neutrality of the United Nations system.

As for UNDP, the SDGs will better anchor its work on governance and resilience in the global development agenda. UNDP will also be well placed to continue supporting national and local authorities and advance the post-2015 agenda on the basis of its experience with the Millennium Development Goals, mandate and traditional comparative advantages in terms of its field presence, trust of governments, convening power, neutrality and coordination role. The set of tools that UNDP has supported at the country level—to monitor, report, plan, budget and programme about the Millennium Development Goals—will remain broadly relevant after 2015 when applied to the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As UNDP approaches the post-2015 era, it clearly needs to reflect on the tools, strategies and partnerships it will bring to bear in supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, some unfinished MDG business remains.

Recommendation 1: UNDP should organize a last round of MDG country reports (end-line reports) in 2016–2017 to measure progress over the entire period covered by the Goals, establish baselines for the SDG era and identify lessons learned and good practices. This will allow UNDP to establish programmes on a strong empirical basis about what forms of support worked during the ‘MDG era’ and what did not. UNDP should continue support to the ‘unfinished Goals’ even after 2015, by helping focus development efforts on the poorest countries as well as pockets of deprivation within middle- and high-income countries.

The last round of reports will require funding to be made available to countries, as previously arranged for the MDG reports leading up to the MDG Summits in 2005 and 2010, and should

be combined with an initial analysis of countries interest for the SDGs (recommendation 4).

The post-2015 agenda will widen the horizon, from the almost single-minded focus on poverty that was the defining characteristic of the Millennium Development Goals, to a much richer agenda that hopefully will still include the eradication of extreme poverty along with many other goals. There is a risk that the fight against poverty, whether in low- or middle-income countries, will be de-emphasized by governments and development partners. UNDP must ensure that due attention and resources remain targeted to the poorest countries, and within a country to the poorest regions and households, even after 2015.

Management response: UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts and notes the need to capitalize on the experience of UNDP with the Goals, to recommit to closing the unfinished business and to facilitate a smooth transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals.

With UNDP support as part of its scorekeeping role, countries have reported regularly on progress. Over 450 national reports have been produced to date. Several reports were also produced at the subnational level. These generated the evidence base to inform policies within countries, while also helping to extract cross-country trends and empowering national delegations within regional and global forums. A concluding round of national reports is expected to be produced by some countries in 2015–2016 to present a final stocktaking, establish national baselines for the sustainable development goals/post-2015 development agenda and facilitate a smooth transition to implementation and monitoring for this successor development agenda. Headquarters, regional service centres and UNDP Country Offices are providing the technical support needed for the preparation of these reports, upon demand.

From the lessons learned and evidence base gathered from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the following actions are proposed to tackle the ‘unfinished business’:

- *Bringing less visible Goals back in focus (e.g. gender equality and empowerment of women; universal access to reproductive health and family planning; access to sanitation);*
- *Sustaining gains already made and achieving remaining targets;*
- *Reaching the ‘last mile’ by extending Goal-related gains to the entire population; and*
- *Using disaggregated data to monitor development achievements.*

Recommendation 2: UNDP should continue to provide Member States and UN organizations with guidance and thought leadership at the level of the entire SDG agenda on how to translate the post-2015 agenda at the national and subnational levels by establishing clear local priorities, while maintaining some degree of comprehensiveness and coherence with the global agenda.

The present sectoral activities of UNDP in good governance, crisis and recovery, environment and poverty are well covered in the emerging post-2015 development agenda. UNDP could therefore opt to support only those specific SDGs that match its mandate and sectoral work, as specialized United Nations agencies probably will do. Over and beyond such sectoral contributions, the experience of UNDP in cross-sectoral work and its United Nations coordination mandate make a strong case for UNDP also to provide Member States and other organizations some guidance and thought leadership at the level of the entire SDG agenda, as it did for the Millennium Development Goals.

Given the likely long ‘menu’ of future SDG targets and indicators, there is a risk that some countries may pick and choose a few SDGs reflecting their core national areas of interest, and drop the rest of the agenda. While recognizing the need for local adaptation and the responsibility of developing nations to set their own development agendas, UNDP can help maintain some coherence to the SDGs as a whole by researching

and raising awareness about the links between different goals. In this capacity, UNDP thought leadership work potentially will provide added value, highlighting the trade-offs that are inherent to the concept of sustainable development and proposing pragmatic ways to negotiate these trade-offs between the different goals, using a ‘whole of government’ approach.

***Management response:** UNDP welcomes this recommendation and agrees that 2015 provides an opportunity to leverage the experience and mandate of UNDP to successfully transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals. Products and services such as the MAF, guidelines for Goal monitoring at country level, the several tools to support the development of Goal-based national development strategies and the evidence base generated for successful negotiations and discussions related to the sustainable development goals can be suitably transformed to meet part of what is needed to guide the implementation of those goals beyond 2015. At the same time, the period leading up to the United Nations Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be one of intense activity on the part of Member States and civil society, with a continuing demand for definitive analysis and evidence, until the global development agenda has been negotiated in detail. Knowledge about how implementation actually worked for the Millennium Development Goals in different countries and at the subnational level will help to inform these discussions and localization of the sustainable development goals. UNDP will also strengthen its existing collaboration with United Nations regional commissions to support actions towards the achievement and monitoring of the sustainable development goals at the regional level.*

Recommendation 3: While the post-2015 global agenda presents new challenges, the roles UNDP played during the Millennium Development Goal era will remain useful and should be carried forward and enhanced for greater effectiveness, as follows:

a) **Coordination: A greater level of coordination among United Nations agencies and**

a more active engagement on behalf of UNCT members will be required to effectively support the highly technical SDG agenda. At the global level, the CEB should continue to review the implementation of the approved MAF action plans, as well as that of SDG plans and progress at the country level through a ‘MAF successor’ that would help prioritize areas of the SDGs;

b) **Campaigning: A continuation of the Millennium Campaign will be necessary to promote an understanding of the SDGs worldwide, but with a better connection with UNDP regional bureaux and Country Offices to ensure a wider geographical coverage of the campaign.** In spite of the participatory process through which the new goals were developed, the final collective global agreement will be somewhat different from what any individual country, institution or person wanted. With the core of SDGs defined, the time has come for the United Nations system to work collectively on a ‘re-education programme’ to ensure that the new targets and indicators defined at the global level are understood in the country context. This should involve an orientation of senior UNDP leadership (Resident Representatives, Country Directors, Deputy Resident Representatives) on what the SDGs are and what their role will be;

c) **Scorekeeping: UNDP should continue its coordinating role in country-level reporting and monitoring against the SDGs, and continue to invest in the quality of the data, in particular through more prolonged and in-depth technical engagement with the UNCT and the World Bank during report preparation.** The SDGs will use much more comprehensive data sets, requiring a quantum leap in statistical capacity. UNDP will do well to maintain its current focus of coordinating the production of reports at the country level, drawing on its clear comparative advantage at this level, on the capacities already built and on the technical expertise of specialized agencies. It might also wish to

consider a stronger role of the World Bank in the production of the SDG reports so as to bring to bear its greater capacity to produce, manage and interpret economic data. Each SDG report should include a transparent discussion of the quality and limitations of the data;

- d) **MAF: As a matter of urgency, a new tool for bottleneck analysis will need to be developed with broad participation from United Nations agencies and the World Bank in order to sharpen the SDG focus at the national or subnational levels.** The post-2015 development agenda is meant to be universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development. Local customization of goals and targets may therefore happen at a much broader scale than was the case for the Millennium Development Goals. A new tool will be necessary, developed and piloted as a joint United Nations effort, to make it more receptive to innovative thinking and to learn from similar tools developed by specialized agencies. Reaching a sharper focus at the country level is also the vocation of the common country assessment, which could use some MAF-inspired analysis techniques;
- e) **Policy and planning: UNDP must train its eye on the real goal: a change in the lives of the poor.** While it should continue to help align national development plans with international goals (cf. Recommendation 4 below), it should also work on financing and delivery mechanisms with a view to bring lofty strategies down to earth and deliver real services to real people. UNDP will also have to rely more on its core comparative advantage in the area of sustainable human development, since even within UNDP, many policymakers think of sustainable development as environmental management. Significant work will be required for them to understand the economic, social and ecological balancing required and what this means for policy and planning;

- f) **Initiatives at the decentralized level: SDG monitoring and planning at the subnational level will remain important, especially in the light of leaving nobody behind and addressing themes of social exclusion and inequality.** UNDP and UNCDF should sort their differences and combine their efforts in a more proactive way, recognizing that UNCDF brings its unique capacity and expertise on decentralization, while UNDP has better access to governments and donors at the upstream policy level. A continuation of the ART-Global Initiative beyond its scheduled termination at the end of 2015 would also appear desirable in view of the fact that UNCDF can invest only in least developed countries.

Management response: UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and notes that UNDP will take further actions to ensure that institutional memory is preserved and that lessons learned are well documented to help countries deliver better. UNDP will undertake a comprehensive stocktaking and mapping of the activities it has supported during the Millennium Development Goal period to effectively codify lessons learned on 'what has worked and what has not' so as to inform its knowledge products, tools and services offered in the post-2015 period.

Recommendation 4: UNDP support to countries and local governments in tailoring, planning and implementing the SDGs at the national and local levels should take into systematic consideration key local factors known to influence the effectiveness of goal-based development planning, so as to focus assistance on countries and regions with good prospects for implementing their SDG-based plans and policies.

The capacity of UNDP to customize and adapt its products and services to the needs of specific countries is an important strength that will need to be further enhanced to develop a context-driven SDG support programme. This evaluation has found a series of factors that have negatively

affected the likelihood of countries to implement their Millennium Development Goal-aligned plans. In order to target UNDP development planning support and resources on countries with good prospects for implementing their SDG-based plans and policies, the strategy of support to the SDGs should be rooted in an initial political economy analysis that maps interest in the SDGs at the national level, and assesses the prevalence of key factors known to influence the effectiveness of goal-based development planning. Where these key contributing factors are not yet in place, UNDP should try and advocate for them as a prerequisite to any meaningful SDG-based planning.

Management response: UNDP takes note of this recommendation, but notes that action on the ground is primarily motivated by demand from countries.

Over the transitional period 2015–2016, UNDP will continue to deliver on its mandate and commitments to support countries to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, while also transitioning to the implementation of the successor agenda. The UNDP role in supporting countries to achieve the Goals encompasses three pillars, which will provide good experience and evidence for transitioning to the sustainable development goals. Specifically, UNDP will adopt a forward-looking strategy comprising:

1. *Implementation: Continue supporting countries in their efforts to develop and implement strategies and plans to achieve the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, including acceleration efforts and developing tools to localize the sustainable development goals;*
2. *Monitoring: As 'scorekeeper' for the Millennium Development Goals, assisting in monitoring progress at the country level and supporting countries to reflect on implications and pathways for achievement of the sustainable development goals. There is a need to embed prospective analysis and multisectoral perspectives in the next round of monitoring efforts; and*

3. *Advocacy and thought leadership: Make available evidence-based advocacy and analysis supporting specific outcomes in multilateral and global forums.*

Recommendation 5: In order to support country programmes and learn from field-level experiences in SDG implementation, UNDP should establish and maintain over time a cadre of dedicated advisers at headquarters and in regional hubs, able to support the SDG work of regional bureaux and Country Offices over the long term, bring coherence to the overall effort and maintain some institutional memory. UNDP should document the varied approaches that will be used at the country level in a more systematic and objective way than has been the case so far. Resource mobilization and the management of trust funds also need to be brought into a more coherent framework to support country-level activities.

The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support needs to find ways to monitor consistently, systematically and over the entire SDG period: (a) its own advisory services in support of the SDGs; (b) the varied approaches used by UNDP Country Offices to support SDG implementation at the country level; and (c) SDG-related results across programme countries. Online forums, workshops and reviews have helped connect United Nations staff implementing the Millennium Development Goals, but information needs to be distilled further in order to learn from different countries' experiences. UNDP should explore methods to incentivize staff to document failures as much as successes, since one can only learn from a consideration of both.

UNDP should continue to invest resources in initiatives directly targeting communities for sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals/SDGs, but should do so in coherence with its upstream work e.g. for instance via greater use of seed funding that could facilitate uptake and scaling up of innovations. The practice of setting up specific projects and units at arm's length from the regular

UNDP structure (e.g. the Millennium Campaign and Millennium Project) did not yield significant benefits and should be avoided as it only translates into greater disconnect between different strands of work.

***Management response:** The structural change at headquarters and regional levels is expected to produce a more functionally and geographically integrated organization to deliver on the current Strategic Plan. The restructuring is delivering an optimized regional presence with more advisory and support services moving to the regional level, to help Country Offices deliver quality results more efficiently, which will benefit the implementation of*

the sustainable development goals. With the establishment of the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, all policy and programme support services are aggregated under a single bureau. At the same time, a new Crisis Response Unit was established in order to deploy staff with the relevant expertise on the ground more promptly and efficiently as crises develop. Combined with the rationalization of management support and a new accountability framework, the new structure will make UNDP a leaner and more transparent organization. UNDP will take further actions to ensure that institutional memory is preserved and that lessons learned are well documented to help countries deliver.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the goals, scope and methodology of this evaluation, which focuses on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) role in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the national level. Considerations of scope are of particular note, as the evaluation reviewed a broad range of initiatives implemented over a long period (2002–2014). During these 12 years, the MDGs permeated almost everything that UNDP did. Their widespread use in and beyond UNDP presented a challenge to this evaluation, which had to be carefully delimited to avoid an overly ambitious enquiry.

1.1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The 2000 Millennium Summit culminated in the Millennium Declaration, which presented an internationally agreed set of quantifiable and time-bound goals to advance human development at the national level and globally. By clearly identifying dimensions where improvement was necessary to assure equitable and sustainable progress, the MDGs established a global frame of reference that focused the efforts of multiple development actors—UNDP in particular.

The MDGs have shaped the UNDP programming framework to a considerable extent since 2000. The focus of UNDP support to MDG achievement has evolved over time. Initially, UNDP focused on raising awareness and ensuring stakeholder buy-in through MDG monitoring and a series of advocacy campaigns. After 2005, focus shifted to supporting MDG integration and mainstreaming in national development strategies, including through estimating the cost

of achieving the Goals in specific countries, preparing MDG-consistent macroeconomic frameworks or aligning poverty reduction strategies to the MDGs. During 2010–2014, UNDP concentrated on providing direct support to countries with lagging progress towards MDG achievement through the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF).

At its 2013 second regular session, the UNDP Executive Board requested that the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) carry out a thematic evaluation of the “role of UNDP in supporting national achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,”¹ noting the high strategic importance of the MDGs and the potential to inform the post-2015 global development agenda. This evaluation, to be presented at the June 2015 session of the UNDP Executive Board, was carried out within the overall provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy with the following purposes:

- Provide substantive support to the UNDP Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;
- Support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners; and
- Draw lessons from UNDP support to MDG achievement in order to inform the strategy of future support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerging from the post-2015 agenda.

The specific objectives of this evaluation are:

- To assess the results achieved by UNDP in supporting national achievement of the MDGs;

1 UNDP, 'Report of the second regular session 2013 (9 to 13 September 2013, New York)', DP/2014/1, October 2013.

- To identify the factors that affected UNDP contribution and performance, including: strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities; as well as which decisions, strategies and approaches have worked and which have not; and
- Based on the above, to provide strategic recommendations for fine tuning the institutional strategy of support to the post 2015 agenda.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation covered the period from 2002 to 2014, beginning with the United Nations Millennium Campaign, which was the first significant MDG-related UNDP-executed programme.² The evaluation also considered the preceding years to provide a historical context. Aiming to deliver a forward-looking assessment that yields recommendations on how UNDP can best support the next set of international development goals, the evaluation provides a rapid overview of UNDP involvement in the design of the post-2015 agenda. However, this work was deemed too recent to be evaluated.

UNDP support to MDG achievement was delivered through a broad range of global, regional and national initiatives. In fact, all UNDP work aims to contribute to MDG achievement in some way or another, as the MDGs served as the foundation for the strategic frameworks during the period under review (beginning with the Second Multi-Year Funding Framework, 2004–2007,³

and continuing through to the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013).⁴

Naturally, this thematic evaluation could not assess all UNDP programmes or their total contribution to MDG achievement. As such, the review was carefully structured to focus on the tools and approaches UNDP used to explicitly support MDG achievement at the country level, emphasizing comprehensive support to *all* goals as a ‘package’. Such scope excluded activities in support of *one* particular MDG or sector (e.g. environmental projects such as MDG Carbon, or early recovery projects).⁵ As a result, this evaluation likely underestimated the total UNDP contribution to country-level MDG achievement.

The evaluation covered those global and regional activities that had a clear connection with country-level MDGs-focused work (e.g. headquarters-based production of guidelines intended for Country Offices). Box 1 provides an overview of the types of initiatives reviewed. These initiatives focused predominantly on upstream policy advice, advocacy, awareness-raising and progress monitoring. Evaluating MDG localization, national MAFs and the Joint Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund also entailed reviewing a limited amount of downstream work.

The evaluation did not assess the Millennium Villages, as their inclusion would have required greater resources and time than available. A comprehensive evaluation by Columbia University’s Earth Institute is scheduled for 2016.⁶ The Spain-

2 The Millennium Campaign was administered by UNDP on behalf of the UN system.

3 UNDP, ‘Second Multi-Year Funding Framework, 2004–2007’, DP/2003/32, August 2003.

4 The UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013 reaffirmed achievement of internationally agreed upon goals, including the MDGs, as its basis and recognized capacity development as the overarching UNDP contribution in assisting country efforts towards MDG achievement. However, and perhaps not surprisingly, given that the 2015 deadline comes early in the plan’s timeline, the latest UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, makes scant mention of the MDGs. See Chapter 3.

5 Launched in 2007 and managed by the UNDP Environment Group, MDG Carbon (formerly the MDG Carbon Facility) is an innovative mechanism for developing and commercializing emission reduction projects. See undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/projects_and_initiatives/mdg-carbon.html.

6 Implemented in association with the Colombia University Earth Institute, the Millennium Villages are 12 rural African communities receiving significant long-term support to lift them out of poverty and demonstrate that the MDGs can be achieved at a reasonable cost. For information on the planned evaluation, see cgds.columbia.edu/what-we-do/data/monitoring-and-evaluation.

Box 1. The Evaluation Scope at a Glance

- **MDG ‘champion’:** Millennium Campaign and other advocacy and influencing efforts
- **MDG ‘scorekeeper’:** country and regional MDG Reports, MDG Monitor and MDG Gap Task Force
- **Technical assistance and policy support:** to develop and scale-up MDG-based development strategies at the national, subnational and sectoral levels; research by the Millennium Project and the UNDP MDG Group that took over the role in 2007; needs assessment and costing; MDG-consistent macroeconomic frameworks and financing strategies; MDG localization; and the MDG Acceleration Framework
- **Internal UNDP mechanisms to prioritize MDGs:** Millennium Trust Fund and the more recent Joint Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund; regional initiatives for MDG planning, implementation and monitoring; and other institutional mechanisms
- **Relevant country programmes and projects:** in support of efforts to achieve and monitor progress towards achieving the MDGs

UN MDG Achievement Fund, administered by UNDP, was evaluated in 2014 and the results were taken into account by the present evaluation. Finally, the United Nations Development Group’s (UNDG) MDG coordination mechanisms (e.g. UNDG MDG Task Force and UNDG Policy Network for the MDGs) were excluded from the scope as this inter-agency coordination work was implemented by UNDG rather than UNDP.

1.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

Though carefully scoped, the evaluation remained quite broad. A study of this magnitude had to focus on questions deemed important to most stakeholders. The evaluation team conducted a series of consultations with past and current UNDP staff involved in the design, rollout or use of MDG-related tools. The resulting set of criteria and evaluation questions informed the design of all data collection tools, and included:

- **Relevance:** Was UNDP support to MDG achievement relevant to programme countries’ needs and consistent with the organization’s mandate?
- **Effectiveness:** What results did UNDP contribute to in support of MDG achievement?
- **Efficiency:** How efficiently did UNDP use its resources to support MDG achievement?

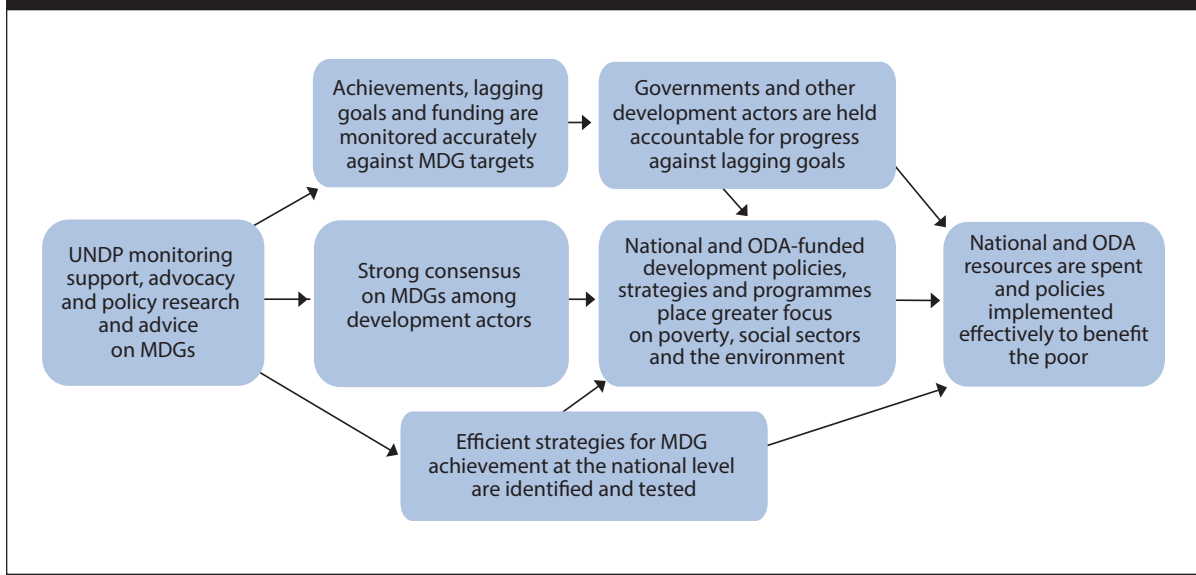
- **Impact and sustainability:** Are these results significant and sustainable or likely to be sustainable?
- **Positioning and partnerships:** How did UNDP work with others to support MDG achievement?

A detailed list of evaluation questions is presented in the terms of reference in Annex 1, as collected through interviews with key informants.

Evaluation questions were further refined and structured through a detailed analysis of the results frameworks and impact pathways to which UNDP was aiming to contribute, modelled through a theory of change outlined in Annex 1. In essence, the evaluation focused on the ‘planning pathway’ of the theory of change (see Figure 1): the degree to which a broad consensus on MDGs among development actors led them to incorporate the MDGs in development plans, policies, strategies and programmes so as to improve focus on poverty eradication, social sectors and the environment.

It is worth noting that this pathway included both national and donor programmes—those funded by the national budget (supplemented as it may by foreign aid) and by official development assistance (ODA). While the MDGs were initially conceived as tools to orient international development assistance, they were also adopted by a large number of

Figure 1. Simplified Theory of Change of the UNDP Approach to MDG Support



developing countries and adapted to their national and subnational development strategies.

While the underlying theory of change noted the intended outcome on donor policies, the evaluation did not systematically assess the global UNDP role in advocating or coordinating dialogue with donors to fund the MDGs beyond its work associated with MDG costing, planning and coordination at the country level.

Given the multi-partner nature of many of the processes involved in attaining the MDGs, multiple external influences on related outcomes and the absence of a ‘counterfactual’ scenario⁷ (such as an identical world without the MDGs in it), the evaluation had limited capacity to attribute successes specifically to UNDP. Most programmes assessed involved collaborations with national governments, other United Nations entities, non-governmental and civil society organizations and charitable institutions. Opportunities for joint evaluations were explored to no avail.

As a result, the evaluation focused on documenting UNDP contributions not necessarily to the high-level impact of national MDGs achievement, but rather at the outcome level, within the UNDP sphere of influence (e.g. formulation and implementation of MDGs-based national policies and programmes). At the same time, the evaluation acknowledged external factors influencing MDG achievement and the contributions of a wide range of partners, chief among which were the concerned national governments. The contribution from UNDP was assessed in a sample of countries broadly representative of UNDP programme countries, rather than in an exhaustive manner in all countries and contexts. These country results were then compared and aggregated into general findings, a process that inevitably leads to a loss of detail.⁸ Another limitation of the sample-based approach is that the contribution of UNDP to MDG achievement at the country level cannot be systematically compared with that of other players, as would be possible with a smaller scope (e.g. with a project evaluation).

7 In the evaluation practice, a counterfactual situation or condition, real or theoretical, is one that would result from the absence of the evaluated programme or intervention. Comparing what happens with and without the evaluated programme allows an evaluator to hypothesize regarding programme impact.

8 For example, UNDP role in helping draft national poverty reduction strategy papers varied from peripheral (e.g. commenting on drafts) to absolutely essential (e.g. commissioning surveys, developing initial drafts) depending on the country concerned.

1.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The evaluation relied on multiple sources for data collection and mixed methods for analysis, validation and triangulation of evidence against the evaluation questions. Sources of data and methods of collection included:

- Document review: analysis of progress reports, financial and administrative data and a synthesis of evidence from prior global and regional evaluations,⁹ relevant Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) and outcome evaluations;
- Semi-structured interviews at headquarters, either in person or by telephone, with key informants in UNDP, the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination,¹⁰ other UN agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC), and the World Bank;
- Eleven¹¹ country case studies collected in-depth information on country-level outcomes (with additional interviews of government representatives, donor focal points, UNDP and other UN agency staff, and local non-governmental and civil society actors);
- An in-depth review of national development strategies, and the degree to which these integrated the MDGs in 50 countries (including 10 of the 11 case-study countries);
- A questionnaire survey targeted to UNDP staff with strong involvement in MDG programmes; and
- A structured critical review of eleven MDG-

related guidance notes issued by UNDP headquarters.

Case studies selected for this evaluation included a few countries with a medium or low level of UNDP engagement. However, in order to understand why UNDP engagement varied among countries and whether a critical mass of activities was required to achieve impact, the case study sample over-represents countries with a high degree of UNDP engagement. It would have made little sense to allocate much time and resources studying countries where UNDP has not done much in terms of MDG support. The resulting bias was, to the extent possible, taken into account during analysis and interpretation of results.

Evaluation tools overlapped in a number of countries (see Figure 2 and Table 1), facilitating triangulation between different tools.

Two originally envisaged methods of data collection were not utilized: a virtual debate on Teamworks (a UNDP knowledge platform) and cybermetric and social network analysis of Teamworks and other communication products. Early stages of the evaluation demonstrated that Teamworks was not actively used as a medium for technical assistance and document dissemination. Instead, the evaluation commissioned the critical review of eleven guideline documents related to MDG planning, reporting or campaigning so as to strengthen its evidence base in the area of knowledge management and technical assistance.

The country case studies (CCS) were meant to collect rich information about the complex and multifaceted nature of UNDP engagement at the country level. The evaluation used a

9 Including the global evaluations of the Millennium Campaign; the recent final independent evaluation of the MDG-F; IEO series of evaluations of the global programme and of all regional programmes; the IEO evaluation of the strategic plan; and the IEO evaluation of UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction.

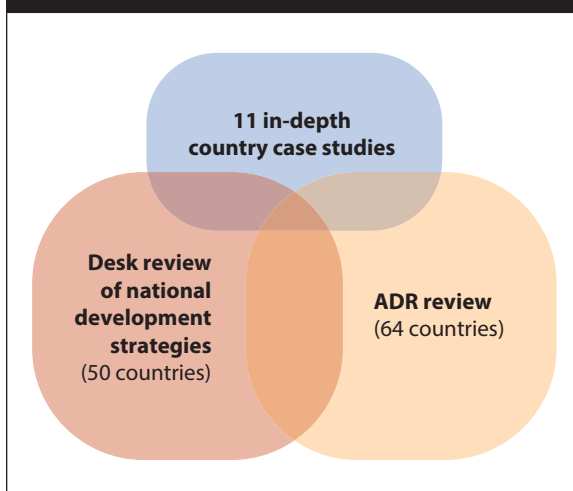
10 The United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination brings together the Executive Heads of the 11 UN funds and programmes, 17 specialized agencies and related organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, under the chairmanship of the United Nations Secretary-General. It meets twice a year to further coordination and cooperation on a wide range of substantive and management issues concerning the United Nations system as a whole.

11 The evaluation originally envisaged 12 country case studies, but one of these could not be conducted.

Table 1. Evaluation Data Collection Methods and Coverage of UNDP Programme Countries

	Number of countries examined by region					
	Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Arab States	Europe and the CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean	Total
Country case studies	4	3	1	1	2	11
National development strategy review	15	14	6	10	10	55
ADR meta-synthesis	17	17	9	10	12	65
Number of UNDP country programmes examined in substantial depth	27	20	13	15	15	90
Number of UNDP country programmes (total)	46	24	17	22	26	135
Percent of all UNDP programmes covered by this evaluation	59%	83%	76%	68%	58%	67%

Figure 2. Primary Data Collection Methods



purposive sampling approach to capture the variability of factors and conditions that occurred across programme countries. The sample of case study countries (see Table 2) was drawn using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a social sciences method that helps identify and analyse complex causal pathways and interactions among various factors.¹² Desk review and preliminary interviews with key informants supported the case study country selection process by helping identify a number of factors likely

to affect UNDP country-level performance and results, including: programme country's state of development (as expressed by its Human Development Index), levels of ODA, and the UNDP Regional Bureau involved;¹³ the comprehensiveness of UNDP's engagement across a range of roles; and the level of expenditures germane to the MDGs. These factors were used to inform the sample selection process.

While primarily focused on results achieved at the country level, the evaluation documented and reviewed global and regional processes and results as well, as those were intrinsically linked to country-level results and helped explain and contextualize them. At the regional level, visits to several regional centres and contact with key regional groupings (e.g. UN Economic Commission for Africa, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) complemented country studies and helped incorporate regional processes and stakeholders into the analysis.

The desk review of national development strategies aimed to complement and expand upon country case study analyses on a critical aspect of the underlying theory of change: the adoption

12 This method provides a better foundation for generalizing across cases than less formal and more qualitative uses of case study information, thus increasing the analytic rigour of case study selection and analysis and strengthening 'external validity' (i.e. the extent to which case study country results can be generalized and applied to other cases).

13 UNDP regional bureaux and service centres played an important role in rolling out different MDG-related tools.

Table 2. Country Case Studies				
Country	Human Development Index 2012 (value)	ODA share of gross national income, 2010 (%)	UNDP engagement on MDGs	Areas of UNDP support
Africa				
Ethiopia	Low (0.396)	High (7.86)	High	MDG planning and costing (since 2004); monitoring and reporting; and MAF on maternal health
Ghana	Medium (0.558)	Medium (4.69)	High	MDG needs assessment (2004); MDG-related support for national and district-level planning; statistical support to Parliamentary Committee; and two MAFs on maternal health and sanitation
Madagascar	Low (0.483)	Medium (3.91)	Low	Light MDG upstream work with support to national planning, monitoring; latest MDG report planned to contribute to a MAF
Mali	Low (0.344)	High (10.21)	High	MDG localization, monitoring and costing; and MAF on food security and nutrition
Asia and the Pacific				
Bangladesh	Low (0.515)	Low (1.69)	High	Large MDG portfolio with focus on national/local planning, statistical tools, MDG costing in 2004 and localization
Indonesia	Medium (0.629)	Low (0.01)	High	Extensive MDG work for national and subnational MDG planning and budgeting; support to national MDG Secretariat; and MAFs at the national and provincial levels
Mongolia	Medium (0.675)	Medium (4.68)	Medium	MDG needs assessment (circa 2005); MDG-9 on Human Rights and Democratic Governance, long-running MDG monitoring project
Latin America and the Caribbean				
Belize	Medium (0.702)	Low (1.56)	Low	Small MDG portfolio compared to other countries, mainly since 2007 with monitoring, MAF on water and sanitation, and some costing
Colombia	High (0.719)	Low (0.22)	High	MDG policy support at national and subnational levels; monitoring; MAF; and Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund
Arab States				
Sudan	Low (0.414)	Low (1.74)	Medium	MDG localization, costing and needs assessment; advocacy; national and local monitoring; and MAF on water and sanitation
Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States				
Albania	High (0.749)	Medium (2.74)	High	National and local MDG planning; monitoring; and European integration social inclusion programmes

of MDG-based national development strategies. The selection of the 50 countries for development strategy review therefore used the same criteria as case study country selection, including region, income, Human Development Index and level of official development assistance.

The national development strategy review also purposefully included 10 of the 11 countries selected for the case studies so as to strengthen triangulation between the country case studies and the national development strategy review.

In addition, eleven countries were added to the national development strategy sample in order to construct two potential counterfactuals¹⁴ to MDG adoption in national development strategies:

- **Crisis-affected countries** (five), under the rationale that these would tend to **not** prioritize¹⁵ the MDGs in their development planning: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Iraq; and
- **Politically stable countries with limited initial interest** in the MDGs (six): China, India, Iran, Russia, South Africa and Turkey.

A questionnaire targeting UNDP staff with strong past or ongoing involvement in MDG programming elicited feedback on the usefulness of UNDP support to the MDG agenda and on how to improve such support. The questionnaire focused on reviewing MDG-related tasks and projects in which respondents participated personally, while also inviting broader comments on UNDP MDG implementation efforts as well

as on the MDGs themselves. The questionnaire received 227 responses from 111 countries.

Finally, the evaluation included a critical review of UNDP headquarters-issued MDG guidance notes (see Table 3), under the assumption that the quality of such guidelines was likely a key factor influencing UNDP efficiency in rolling out various MDG-related tools. Guidance notes were assessed using criteria adapted from the established UNDP knowledge product quality assurance process: clarity of purpose, audience and conceptual framework; clarity of practical guidance and assignment of responsibilities; efficacy of pedagogy; resources provided; and length.¹⁶

1.5 EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND PROCESS

The IEO conducted this evaluation and had the overall responsibility for conceptualization and design, managing the evaluation process and producing the final report for presentation to the

Table 3. UNDP MDG Guidance Documents Reviewed

Purpose	Title (year)
Campaigning	The Blue Book: A Hands-On Approach to Advocating for the MDGs (2004)
Reporting	Reporting on the MDGs at the Country Level: Guidance Note (2001)
	Country Reporting on the MDGs: Second Guidance Note (2003)
	Addendum to Second Guidance Note on Country Reporting on the MDGs (2009)
	Addendum to MDG Report Guidelines (2013)
MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework: Operational Note (2011)
	MDG Acceleration Framework (2011)
Planning	Preparing National Development Strategies to Achieve the MDGs: A Handbook (2005)
	MDG Guidebook: Aligning National Development Strategies with the MDGs (2010)
	Toolkit for Localising the MDGs: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource (2005)
	UNDP Practice Note: Localizing the MDGs (2006)

14 See footnote 7.

15 As it turned out, crisis-affected countries were quite likely to adopt the MDGs in their national strategies, though less likely to actually implement them. See Section 4.2 Effectiveness.

16 UNDP, 'UNDP Knowledge Products: Quality Assurance Process', 2009.

Executive Board. An IEO evaluation manager led the evaluation team, and two members of the IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel¹⁷ advised this evaluation from its inception in March 2014. The advisers provided important strategic, methodological and substantive inputs to the evaluation process and reviewed its key outputs, including this evaluation report.

An informal reference group was established in April 2014, starting with the review of the evaluation Terms of Reference. This group, comprised key UNDP staff from the Bureau for Development Policy and regional bureaux, was closely consulted throughout the evaluation process to advise on the terms of reference and proposed country case studies, help reach specific audiences and participate in discussions of findings and conclusions.

The UNDP Organizational Performance Group¹⁸ reviewed the draft terms of reference and draft evaluation report, providing consolidated comments from programme and policy units.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a brief historical perspective of how the MDGs were conceptualized and negotiated and how they evolved overtime. Chapter 3 describes UNDP's emergence as a key UN implementing agency, as well as how it positioned itself within the evolving international development agenda following the passage of the MDGs. Chapter 4 follows with an assessment of UNDP performance, and Chapter 5 sets out the conclusions and recommendations based on evaluation findings.

17 Miguel Szekely and Jayati Ghosh are experts in the field of evaluation and development. See full list of the IEO Advisory Panel at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/advisory-panel/IEO-International-Evaluation-Advisory-Panel-Members.pdf>

18 The Organizational Performance Group is chaired by the Associate Administrator and comprises all UNDP Bureaux Deputy Directors. The group advises on key priorities for operational policy to support organizational performance and takes decisions on changes to operational policy and procedures where appropriate.

Chapter 2

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This chapter provides a brief historical overview of how the MDGs were conceptualized and negotiated, as a way to situate UNDP contribution to MDG implementation in the appropriate historical and institutional context. The purpose is not to be exhaustive, but rather to help understand how UNDP was positioned to support the MDGs at the turn of the millennium. The historical sequence explored here begins with a series of UN conferences in the 1990s, then moves to the adoption of International Development Goals by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) and to the rise of the poverty reduction agenda within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and concludes with the Millennium Summit and the ensuing 2001 drafting of a short list of eight ‘super-goals’ that would help monitor the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

2.1 UN GOAL-SETTING BEFORE THE MDGS

Since its establishment, the United Nations has set internationally sanctioned, universal goals in specific areas of development, subject to varying success.¹⁹ In the mid-20th century, the UN Charter (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) evidenced the emergence of international norms that would later underpin the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. In its Preamble, the UN Charter states the aim “to promote social progress and better standards of

life” and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights demanded adequate living standards for everyone, including food, clothing, housing and medical care. These documents reflected the international community’s consensus on the inclusion of basic material needs among essential human rights.²⁰

The first United Nations-inspired goals were very specific. The eradication of smallpox declared in 1979, 22 years after the World Health Organization (WHO) had intensified its global programme on smallpox eradication in 1957, demonstrated the power of collective action to achieve common goals. In the wake of the Cold War, the 1990 World Summit for Children provided another successful example of how to generate political and financial commitment to a thematic area—specifically child and maternal health, nutrition and primary education—through setting measurable and time-bound goals. An important aspect of this success was that the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) provided the organizational resources to continue championing the summit’s declaration and mobilizing support.²¹

Throughout the 1990s, as cold war obstructionism gave way to a new spirit of multilateral engagement, the United Nations used its renewed room for manoeuvre to usher in a proliferation of multilateral conferences that emulated the format of the World Summit for Children. To the point where the multitude of conferences addressing an ambitious array of issues—such as the environment,

19 Jolly, Richard, ‘The MDGs in Historical Perspective’, *IDS Bulletin* 41 (1), 2010.

20 Socio-economic rights are often referred to as ‘second-generation human rights’, in contrast to the more political ‘first-generation human rights’ that include freedom of speech and religion, voting rights and the right to a fair trial.

21 Hulme, David, ‘The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A Short History of the World’s Biggest Promise’, Brooks World Poverty Institute, BWPI Working Paper 100, 2009.

Table 4. Key Global Conferences and Summits of the 1990s

Focus	Year (follow-up)	Summary of Outcomes
Children	1990 (2002)	Declaration and Plan of Action on child-related human development goals for the year 2000
Education for all	1990 (2000)	Declaration and Framework for Action to meet learning needs of children, youth and adults by 2015
Least developed countries	1990 (2001)	Declaration and programme of action with commitment to revitalize growth and development
Drug problem	1990 (1998)	Declaration with measures for cooperation to counter the world drug problem
Food security	1992 (1996)	Declaration and plan of action on nutrition and the eradication of hunger
Sustainable development	1992 (2002)	Three major agreements on guiding principles for a future global sustainable development agenda
Human rights	1993 (2001)	Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on promotion and protection of all human rights
Population and development	1994	Programme of action to integrate population issues into socio-economic development proposals
Small island developing states	1994 (2005)	Declaration and programme on principles for development to protect the fragile environments of small islands states
Natural disaster reduction	1994 (2005)	Yokohama Strategy and Plan, and Hyogo Framework for Action
Women	1995 (2005)	Declaration and platform for action on goals of equality, development and peace for women
Social development	1995 (2005)	Declaration and programme of action on social development for least developed / most isolated countries
Human settlements	1996 (2001)	Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration focused on ensuring adequate shelter in an urbanizing world
Youth	1998	Declaration on issues for national youth policies and programmes

Source: United Nations, 'The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All', Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, un.org/en/development/devagenda/devagenda.shtml.

drugs, human settlements, landmines, social development, women and youth (see Table 4)—started to wear the patience of Member States. The phrase 'conference fatigue' entered the development lexicon while ODA from OECD/DAC countries was steadily declining.

2.2 THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

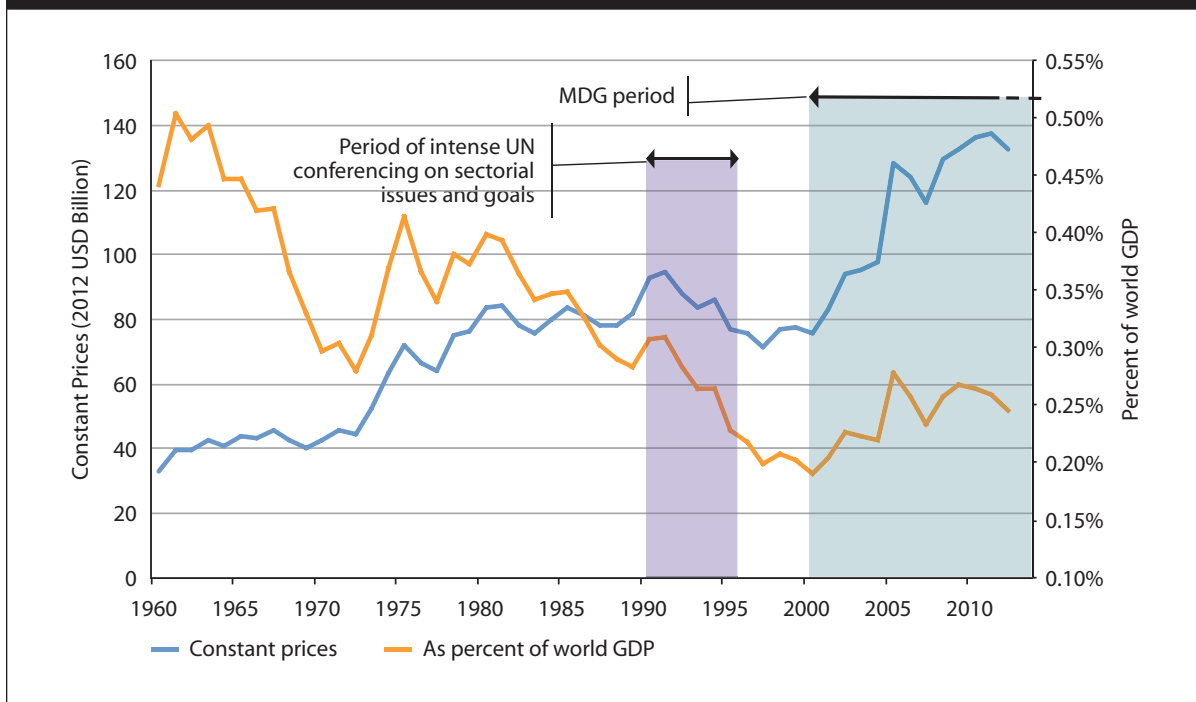
The end of the Cold War also entailed a reduced need for ODA as a diplomatic tool. Despite the

booming world economy, international aid budgets were shrinking and ODA had dropped by 11 percent in real terms between 1992 and 1996 (see Figure 3). Rich countries cut ODA to focus on domestic priorities.²² Countries in transition in the former Eastern Bloc were also benefiting from a significant transfer of ODA resources at the expense of traditional ODA recipients.

In this context, OECD/DAC set up a *Groupe de Réflexion* at the political level in May 1995, to review the future of development aid and the

22 McArthur, John, 'Own the Goals: What the Millennium Development Goals Have Accomplished', Brookings, April 2013.

Figure 3. Total ODA Disbursements by OECD/DAC Countries, 1960–2012



Source: OECD ODA Statistics; see oecd.org/dac/stats/

DAC role. The *Groupe* set out to compare the targets agreed at various United Nations summits and to investigate whether these could be combined into a shorter and more coherent list. The idea of setting targets had become a common device for public service reform, and the concept of results-based management was gaining in popularity. After considering several options, members agreed on a broad set of goals to give the list greater legitimacy and to ensure broad support.²³ The *Groupe* produced what came to be known as the International Development Goals (IDGs), listed in ‘Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation’, a document launched at the May 1996 High Level Meeting of Ministers of Development Cooperation.²⁴

The document set out a limited number of success indicators in order to achieve three over-

arching goals: i) economic well-being; ii) social development; and iii) environmental sustainability and regeneration (see Box 2). The IDGs attracted significant media attention in Europe and the United States.

The International Development Goals were the first to explicitly articulate the objective of halving extreme poverty by 2015, using the World Bank’s \$1/day criterion. Prior to the IDGs, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), held in Copenhagen, had failed to garner support for an ambitious global poverty target, and the \$1/day metric had been criticized as simplistic and not contextualized. The WSSD declaration urged UN member states to formulate and implement national poverty eradication plans; called for structural adjustment policies “to include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty,

23 Hulme, David, ‘The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A Short History of the World’s Biggest Promise’, Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper 100, September 2009.

24 OECD, ‘Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation’, Paris, May 1996.

Box 2. OECD International Development Goals

“It is time to select, taking account of the many targets discussed and agreed at international fora, a limited number of indicators of success by which our efforts can be judged. We are proposing a global development partnership effort through which we can achieve together the following ambitious but realizable goals:

Economic well-being

1. A reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

Social development

2. Universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
3. Demonstrated progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
4. A reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age 5 and a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality, all by 2015;
5. Access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015.

Environmental sustainability and regeneration

6. The current implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.”

Source: OECD, ‘Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation’, 1996.

promoting full and productive employment, and enhancing social integration;”²⁵ and asked both donors and aid recipient countries to allocate 20 percent of their funds to social sectors (i.e. the 20:20 Initiative);²⁶ but it did not set a global target in terms of poverty reduction, talking instead of “specific time-bound commitments to eradicate absolute poverty by a target date *to be specified by each country in its national context*” (emphasis added).²⁷ The declaration further recommended that each country develop its own precise definition and assessment of absolute poverty. Donors represented at the OECD/DAC came back from Copenhagen rather frustrated²⁸ at its outcome, and a year later, published ‘Shaping the 21st Century’, which put

forth the global poverty goal of halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1/day by 2015.

Because the International Development Goals emerged from a small group of northern politicians and aid experts and not from the global community or the United Nations system, they adopted a much narrower focus than earlier summit declarations. There was a clear shift of perspective towards focusing on a few central and measurable facets of poverty and deprivation—and away from the broader and more ambitious rights-based approach that tended to set the tone at United Nations conferences and in the discourse of non-governmental organizations

25 United Nations, ‘Report of the World Summit for Social Development’, A/Conf.166/9, Copenhagen, Denmark, 6–12 March 1995, p.22.

26 The 20:20 Initiative (or Vision), first proposed in the UNDP Human Development Report 1992, was endorsed by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. The principle was for governments to allocate about 20 percent of national budgets—and for donors to allocate the same share of their aid budgets—to basic social services in order to achieve universal access. The idea never received the extent of attention and support later garnered by the MDGs.

27 United Nations, ‘Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development’, A/Conf.166/9, 14 March 1995, para. 25.

28 Interview, Jan Vandemoortele, Head of UNDP Poverty Group (2001–2005), 28 March 2014.

(NGOs).²⁹ The International Development Goals (and the MDGs that followed) reflected the tension between on the one hand the recognition that poverty is multidimensional and that advances of different sectors are mutually supportive (e.g. education helps promote public health) and on the other hand the pragmatic requirement to focus on a limited set of clearly defined and attainable goals.

During the late 1990s, the International Development Goals increasingly gained traction within bilateral circles and soon got the blessing of major multilateral actors. Some donors started to use them to focus their country's aid programmes on poverty reduction goals, and a number of key development ministers, notably Clare Short, United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development from 1997 to 2003, promoted the International Development Goals wherever they travelled. In 1997, the Development Assistance Committee organized its first joint seminar with the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF on indicators of development progress,³⁰ which a year later led to the creation of "a working set of indicators to show progress from the 1990 baseline towards the International Development Goals."³¹

2.3 THE RISE OF THE POVERTY AGENDA AT THE WORLD BANK AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The end of the Cold War also bolstered the liberal economic ideology. By the early 1990s, Russia, Poland and other 'countries in transition'

were being applied shock therapy, and policies dictated by international financial institutions—often termed as 'Washington Consensus' policies—were implemented in many developing countries. Among NGOs and even at the United Nations, these policies rapidly became viewed as a major contributing factor to poverty in developing countries. Many economists and researchers argued that the 'Washington Consensus' was incomplete, that it was missing measures directly targeted at helping the poor, and that growth and equity required "not only more room for market forces and private enterprise, but also the strengthening of the [state] institutions that underpin markets"³² (e.g. a strong judiciary able to fight corruption, enforce property rights and adjudicate contractual disputes).

In this context, the World Bank's *World Development Report 1990: Poverty*³³ attracted much attention. The report called for the use of labour in national economies and for providing the poor with access to basic social services, such as primary health care, family planning, nutrition and primary education. Interestingly, the report posited that economic growth may not be sufficient to reduce poverty in the absence of basic social services for the poor. A decade later, the World Development Report revisited the topic, with its 2000/2001 issue on *Attacking Poverty*.³⁴

In the mid-1990s, James Wolfensohn's nomination for the helm of the World Bank offered an opportunity to reform the organization's policies.³⁵ In 1996, the World Bank and IMF launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries

29 Saith, Ashwani, 'From Universal Values to Millennium Development Goals: Lost in Translation', *Development and Change* (Forum Issue) 37(6): 1167–1200, 2006.

30 OECD, 'DAC in Dates – The History of OECD's Development Assistance Committee', 2006 edition (p.28).

31 Ibid., p.29.

32 See for instance: Birdsall, Nancy, et. al., 'Washington Contentious – Economic Policies for Social Equity in Latin America', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Inter-American Dialogue, 2001.

33 The World Bank, 'World Development Report 1990: Poverty', Oxford University Press, 1990.

34 The World Bank, World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty, Oxford University Press, 2001.

35 In June 1995, Wolfenson stated, "The World Bank had taken on the issues of poverty and development in the broadest sense. But to my eyes, it seemed to approach these challenges in a technocratic way, with language clothed in jargon and devoid of emotion." See Wolfensohn, James D., 'A Global Life', *Public Affairs*, New York, 2010, p.271.

(HIPC) initiative; the Enhanced HIPC followed in 1999. Also in 1999, the World Bank rolled out the Comprehensive Development Framework and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The Framework presented an approach to development planning that linked financial, economic, fiscal, social and environmental factors and mapped the inputs of all actors, including donors, to coordinate development assistance within a coherent framework of macroeconomic, structural and social poverty reduction reforms. The PRSP detailed the borrowing government's strategic approach to poverty reduction, serving both as a planning document and as a precondition for access to HIPC funding.³⁶ In November 1999, the IMF restructured its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility and renamed it the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.

Reform was also high on Kofi Annan's agenda when he became the United Nations Secretary-General in 1997. Annan created UNDG, chaired by the UNDP Administrator, aiming to increase the coherence of the UN system's development activities. Annan also reinforced the Resident Coordinator system and established the twin processes of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to further enhance coherence among UN agencies and promote greater national ownership of the development activities of the UN. Annan also believed that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had to be brought into a partnership with the UN. As explained above, at the time international financial institutions were reorienting themselves towards poverty reduction. Annan saw an opportunity to bridge the long-standing divide

between the World Bank and the United Nations and to forge a wide anti-poverty coalition. In 1999, Annan appointed Mark Malloch-Brown, the World Bank's past Vice-President for External Affairs, to the post of UNDP Administrator, and for the very first time invited the World Bank Executive Directors to address the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which oversees UN system development work.

By the end of the decade, the IMF, OECD, United Nations and the World Bank were all moving towards poverty reduction as a central goal, and the traditional rivalry and ideological disputes that had long characterized the relationship between the United Nations and the World Bank were being replaced by converging agendas—or at least rhetoric—on poverty reduction.

This *rapprochement* was not without its critics. At the June 2000 World Summit for Social Development +5, intended to take stock of Copenhagen commitments, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and OECD/DAC launched a joint report, 'A Better World for All'.³⁷ The report formally endorsed the International Development Goals, but it also advocated globalization and liberalization of trade by developing countries as the best way to reduce poverty. NGOs attending the launch were critical of the support that the United Nations was apparently offering to what they saw as an attempt by northern countries and international financial institutions to dictate an agenda of trade liberalization and macroeconomic stabilization—the very same agenda such NGOs perceived as having failed the world's poor during the numerous financial crises of the 1990s. A joint statement by NGO caucuses mocked the report as an endorsement of 'Bret-

36 Originally designed by the World Bank as an implementation tool for the Comprehensive Development Framework in highly indebted countries, the PRSP evolved into a requirement for any International Development Association borrower, not only the highly indebted countries. Over time, PRSP success eclipsed that of the Comprehensive Development Framework process.

37 IMF, OECD, United Nations and World Bank Group, 'A Better World For All: Progress Towards the International Development Goals', 2000. The report was published under the aegis of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, created in 1999 to "develop a culture of Management for Development Results in international development assistance," thus testifying to the increasing integration of the results-based management approach into the development practice.

ton Woods for All' and asked the United Nations Secretary-General to withdraw his support.³⁸

The launch of 'A Better World for All' yielded an important lesson. While creating the MDGs, caution would overrule the temptation to interperse global goals with specific strategies and normative solutions to achieve the Goals.³⁹

2.4 THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

Considering that the millennium offered a historic opportunity to adopt a long-term view and reflect upon the role of the United Nations in the 21st century, Kofi Annan wanted a strong development-oriented summit, concluding with a powerful declaration that would relay and build upon the momentum of prior conferences.

In December 1998, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 53/202, deciding "to designate the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly 'The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations'" and reflecting the widely held view that the year 2000 constituted "a unique and symbolically compelling moment to articulate and affirm an animating vision" for the United Nations.⁴⁰ Member States also asked the Secretary-General to conduct intergovernmental consultations to identify topics to focus the forthcoming summit. This would lead to the publication of 'We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century', a preparatory document signed by the Secretary-General and presented to Member States at the Millennium Summit. In its final section, entitled 'Considerations for the Millennium Summit', the document calls on the international community to adopt the following targets:

- To halve, by the time this century is 15 years old, the proportion of the world's people

(currently 22 percent) whose income is less than one dollar a day.

- To halve, by the same date, the proportion of people (currently 20 percent) who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water.
- That by the same date all children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
- That by then we will have halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- That, by 2020, we will have achieved significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers around the world.
- To develop strategies to give young people everywhere the chance of finding decent work.
- To ensure that the benefits of information technology are available to all.
- That every national government will from now on commit itself to national policies and programmes directed specifically at reducing poverty, to be developed and applied in consultation with civil society.

Importantly—and in contrast to the International Development Goals—distinct targets and goals were also fleshed out for "the more fortunate countries [who] owe a duty of solidarity to the less fortunate." These included:

- To grant free access to their markets for goods produced in poor countries [...]
- To remove the shackles of debt which currently keep many of the poorest countries imprisoned in their poverty [...]
- To grant more generous development assistance, particularly to those countries which

38 World Council of Churches, 'NGOs Call on the UN to Withdraw Endorsement of "A Better World For All"', Joint Statement by NGO Caucuses, 28 June 2000.

39 Seyedsayamdost, Elham, 'A World Without Poverty: Negotiating the Global Development Agenda', Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 2014.

40 United Nations General Assembly, 'The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations', Resolution A/RES/53/202, 17 December 1998.

are genuinely applying their resources to poverty reduction.

- To work with the pharmaceutical industry and other partners to develop an effective and affordable vaccine against HIV; and to make HIV-related drugs more widely accessible in developing countries.

Interestingly, in his autobiography, Kofi Annan notes that this report was written without much consultation with Member States and specialized UN agencies. The usual process of submitting a draft document to multiple UN agencies and national delegations for comment would have subjected the report to an intense lobbying process, with each stakeholder arguing for the inclusion of their favoured issues, thus defeating the purpose of communicating a coherent global anti-poverty agenda. In contrast to the long and complex preparatory documents and resolutions emanating from United Nations conferences of the 1990s, 'We the Peoples' presented a concise, coherent, well-written and compelling overview of the challenges facing the world and the United Nations system, and set "quantifiable and time-bound targets for poverty eradication [...] around clear, simple, and morally undeniable goals."⁴¹

The Millennium Summit, which took place from 6–8 September 2000 at the United Nations headquarters in New York, was carefully planned to ensure a favourable outcome. It brought together 189 Member States, including 147 heads of state or government and 8,000 other delegates who participated in the discussion around three roundtables. A number of parallel events brought together NGO representatives, religious leaders and parliamentarians who could pressure their government representatives to support a bold declaration.

For example, Oxfam had the opportunity to present two million signatures in support of its Make Poverty History campaign to the Secretary-General during the Summit.⁴² In addition, Annan had framed his preparatory report in such a way that "no one in their right mind could deny" and was able to "get the global deal we were seeking."⁴³ The Millennium Declaration, endorsed unanimously on 8 September 2000 by 189 Member States, contained many of the elements of 'We the Peoples', including the extreme poverty reduction target based on the \$1 a day criterion. The mention for the first time of goals applying to donor countries as well as ODA recipients was critical to garnering such wide support.

2.5 DRAFTING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the following session, the United Nations General Assembly requested that "the Secretary-General urgently prepare a long-term 'roadmap' towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration within the UN system."⁴⁴ An inter-agency expert group was assembled under the co-chairmanship of Michael Doyle (Special Assistant to the United Nations Secretary-General) and Jan Vandemoortele (Head of the UNDP Poverty Group), consisting mainly of statisticians and development economists from OECD/DAC, various UN agencies, the World Bank and the IMF. The group met several times in the spring and summer of 2001 to arrive at a short list of quantitative goals and targets that could be used to monitor the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. In the end, 18 of such targets were taken out verbatim from the agreed language of the Millennium Declaration, assigned indicators and grouped under eight Millennium Development Goals.⁴⁵

41 Annan, Kofi, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace*, Penguin Press, 2012, p. 223.

42 Seyedsayamdost, Elham, 'A World Without Poverty: Negotiating the Global Development Agenda', Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 2014.

43 Annan, Kofi, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace*, Penguin Press, 2012, p. 221.

44 United Nations General Assembly, 'Follow-up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit', Resolution A/RES/55/162, 18 December 2000.

45 Vandemoortele, Jan, 'Advancing the Global Development Agenda Post-2015: Some Thoughts, Ideas and Practical Suggestions', UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, April 2012.

Table 5. The Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger *
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
Goal 5: Improve maternal health
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health *
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it *
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss *
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development
Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries
Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states
Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

*Target added following the 2005 World Summit.

Note: Effective as of 15 January 2008; see Annex 4 for full list of goals, targets and indicators.

The considerations that presided over the selection of MDGs and their targets from those listed in the Millennium Declaration were mainly technical in nature and related to measurability, although the process was not devoid of political considerations. Good governance and democratization, while mentioned in the declaration, were deemed likely to dampen some nations' enthusiasm towards the MDGs and were thus not included among them. Goal 8, written in consultation with the G-77 (Group of 77), established mutual accountability between the 'North' and 'South' and proved critical to the acceptance of the MDGs by G-77 countries.

Finally, the absence of a goal related to reproductive health from the original MDGs was particularly notable in contrast to the preceding International Development Goals.⁴⁶ This omission stemmed from the absence of such language in the Millennium Declaration, itself the result of resistance to such language by some United Nations Member States.

In the end, the MDGs were quite recognizably similar to the OECD-defined set of goals, except Goal 6 focused on HIV/AIDS instead of reproductive health, and Goal 8 was added about development cooperation.⁴⁷ The result was articulated in the Secretary-General's 'Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration',⁴⁸ which enumerated the newly coined MDGs in an appendix. When the 'Road Map' was presented to the September 2001 General Assembly, the MDGs

were merely noted as useful guidance rather than officially approved. It was only four years later, at the 2005 General Assembly meeting,⁴⁹ that the MDGs were officially recognized in a declaration adopted by the General Assembly. Meanwhile, the G-77 and the European Union had formally welcomed the MDGs at various meetings and expressed their willingness to endorse them.

Irrespective of the language, the September 2001 General Assembly 'noting' of the MDGs signalled that a consensus had been reached and brought an end to decades of negotiation and bargaining over the international development agenda.⁵⁰

2.6 THE MDGS GAIN TRACTION

Born modestly in a report appendix and not even formally approved until 2005, the MDGs could have suffered the same fate as many other lofty development goals before them: progressive oblivion after a period of short-lived excitement. Instead, the MDGs have grown into a global frame of reference accepted not only among international development actors such as bilateral donors, international financial institutions and UN system agencies, but also increasingly among national and local governments, NGOs and academia.

As this historical overview has tried to demonstrate, the MDGs represent more than just goals: they are also the product of a broader development vision that stresses results-based management⁵¹ and proposes to focus development

46 The IDGs did include as a goal "access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015." This is the only International Development Goal which did not become an MDG. Reproductive health was introduced in the MDG List as a target in 2005 (5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health).

47 According to Jan Vandemoortel, Head of UNDP Poverty Group from 2001–2005, who helped steer these discussions, the OECD, IMF and World Bank lobbied for including the word 'international' in the name of the newly agreed set of goals, in a clear reference to the International Development Goals. This was rejected due to the manner in which the G-77 had perceived the International Development Goals as donor-centric and unrepresentative of developing country needs.

48 United Nations, 'Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration', Report of the Secretary-General, A/56/326, September 2001.

49 For more information on the 2005 General Assembly meeting, see: un.org/summit2005.

50 Hulme, David, and Fukudu-Parr, Sakiko, 'International Norm Dynamics and "the End of Poverty": Understanding the Millennium Development Goals', BWPI Working Paper 96, June 2009.

51 Ibid.

assistance directly on the poor instead of assuming that economic growth will in time ‘trickle down’ to all of society. The MDGs seek to directly improve human lives and implicitly state that economic growth is not enough for poverty to end. Furthermore, they present poverty reduction as an ethical imperative, based on the frequently asserted notion that for the first time in history, mankind has the capacity to eradicate extreme poverty⁵² and thus has the moral duty to do so. At the same time, the MDGs recognize that poverty is a multidimensional human problem that requires a multifaceted attack.⁵³ Through Goal 8, the MDGs introduce mutual accountability between the ‘North’ and the ‘South’. Finally, and in contrast with structural adjustment programmes that typically entailed a contraction of public social services, the MDGs call for strengthening such services as a way of addressing poverty. While the Washington Consensus tended to see the role of institutions and governments in a dim light, the MDGs reasserted the importance of leadership and priority-setting by governments.⁵⁴

The MDGs quickly came to dominate development discourse and were quite successful in shifting—or at least maintaining—the focus on poverty. National governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies started to refer to them as a central element of their strategies. The donors, who could have clung to the International Development Goals, opted to support the MDGs instead and produced reports to demonstrate MDG alignment of cooperation programmes. At the March 2002 Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, Goal 8 was discussed and fleshed out, helping make the case for developed countries to meet the ODA target of 0.7 percent of gross national

income. The Monterey Conference also set the stage for policy decisions by the European Union and the United States, which represented the first substantial pledges in more than a decade to reverse declining ODA flows.⁵⁵ At the July 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles, members agreed to double development assistance by 2010 and expand debt relief, particularly in Africa. Momentum was building up.

There was also some initial resistance. The reaction of developing country governments was mixed, with some—for example, Brazil and Ethiopia—enthusiastically adopting the MDGs in policies and development plans, while others were lukewarm towards what they saw as yet another developmental fad. Among specialized UN agencies, practitioners typically perceived the MDGs as an undue simplification of complex sectoral issues—almost a gimmick, something suitable only for non-specialists. Similarly, some

“The MDGs are European social policy.
We [IMF] don’t do European social policy.”
– IMF Senior Economist, 2006

(Source: Hulme, David, and Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, ‘International Norm Dynamics and ‘the End of Poverty’: Understanding the Millennium Development Goals’, 2009.)

“As a feminist I think of the MDGs as a Major
Distraction Gimmick—a distraction from the
much more important Platforms for Action
from the UN conferences of the 1990s [...],
on which the MDGs are based.”

– Peggy Antrobus, 2005

(Source: Antrobus, Peggy, ‘Critiquing the MDGs from a Caribbean Perspective’, *Gender and Development*, 13:1, 94–104, 2005.)

52 Owen Barder shows that the idea traces back at least to Truman’s inaugural address to Congress in January 1949: “More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. ... For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people.” See owen.org/blog/6588.

53 Hulme, David, and Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, ‘International Norm Dynamics and “the End of Poverty”’: Understanding the Millennium Development Goals’, BWPI Working Paper 96, June 2009.

54 To be fair, these evolutions were already premised in the World Bank’s Comprehensive Development Framework and PRSP in the late 1990s.

55 United Nations, ‘The United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy’, Office of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2002.

UNDP staff found the MDGs considerably weaker than the human development concept.⁵⁶

More generally, many of those who felt a strong attachment to the outcomes of 1990s conferences thought that the MDGs were short-selling this heritage. On the other side of the spectrum, a few international financial institution economists found the MDGs overly ‘social’. Because the Millennium Declaration did not result from the broad consultations typical of prior UN events, some international NGO networks also felt the MDG process reversed 1990s gains in democratizing UN processes. Another concern among the most radical NGOs was that the MDGs, like in their view the preceding International Development Goals, represented a form of capitulation to the IMF and the World Bank’s pro-liberalization agenda. Finally, quite a few civil society observers found the MDGs lacking for their failure to include some particular issue of importance (e.g. reproductive health or good governance) or reflect growing inequalities within countries.⁵⁷

Despite this early resistance, the MDGs quickly gathered support to the point where they grew into a consensual position, a common and widely used language to speak of poverty reduction and social services. A number of characteristics help explain why this was the case:

- **Their unprecedented political legitimacy** grounded in the UN work of the 1990s and validated by heads of state approval at the Millennium Summit;
- **Their simple and specific nature** as a limited number of easy-to-understand goals, not couched in jargon;

- **Their central focus on basic human needs** (such as food security, child and maternal health and education) that are morally unassailable or politically risky to oppose;
- **Their quantitative and time-bound targets** that lent credibility, as they can be used as planning targets, monitored, costed, etc.;
- **Their inclusion of a partnership between the North and the South**, with mutual obligations and accountability (Goal 8); and
- **Their lack of prescriptive content**—the MDGs set targets but stop short of recommending *ways* to reach those targets; one can therefore pursue them through different strategies.

In September 2010, the High Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, also known as the MDG Review Summit, concluded with the adoption of an outcome document that mandated accelerating progress towards MDG achievement. By then, the 2008–2009 global financial crisis had taken a toll on economic growth, remittance flows and ODA levels, ushering in concerns about the ability to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and even about potential reversals in gains already attained.

2.7 THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The 2010 MDG Review Summit also called for the United Nations to start considering ways to advance the development agenda beyond 2015.⁵⁸ Two years later, the outcome of the June 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development

56 Some of this initial reluctance is perceptible in UNDP Executive Board decisions. In its decision 2002/8 in response to the 2001 annual report of the Administrator, the Executive Board used the phrase “international development goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration” instead of the MDGs. It was only in September 2003, in decision 2003/24 that the Executive Board stated it “welcomes that the MDGs, particularly poverty reduction, are clearly recognized as the overarching basis for all UNDP activities, and underscores the importance of a balanced approach in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.”

57 In 2005, some of these ‘omissions’ were corrected by adding new targets for reproductive health, women’s political representation and decent work, along with more detailed environmental targets. The 2001 MDGs listing had 18 targets and 48 indicators; by 2008 this had extended to 21 targets and 60 indicators.

58 United Nations General Assembly, ‘Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals’, Resolution 65/1, 22 September 2010.

called for an inclusive intergovernmental process to prepare a set of new ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs).⁵⁹ Acting on these recommendations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established several specialized teams, including:

- **A High Level Panel of Eminent Persons**, appointed in July 2012 and composed of civil society, private sector and government leaders from all regions of the world, including three high-level co-chairs: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia; and David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. In May 2013, the panel submitted its recommendations to the Secretary-General in a report that sets out a universal agenda to, *inter alia*, eradicate extreme poverty by 2030.⁶⁰
- **An intergovernmental Open Working Group** tasked with SDG design. The Open Working Group was established on 22 January 2013 by the General Assembly, and tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs for consideration by the General Assembly. It presented its outcome document in July 2014, comprising 17 goals (see Box 3) and 169 targets.⁶¹
- **A UN System Task Team**, chaired by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and UNDP, comprising 60 UN agencies, IMF and the World Bank. In June 2012, the team published ‘Realizing the Future We Want for All’. It also prepared a set of 18 think pieces

that explore how different themes could potentially be reflected in a new framework, and, in March 2013, published ‘A Renewed Global Partnership for Development’.

Regional organizations and UN economic commissions have been conducting consultations to formulate regional positions on the post-2015 development agenda.⁶² Notably, the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa have arrived at a ‘Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda’,⁶³ stressing the need for economic growth and technology transfer as a means of social progress. The United Nations has also organized several global consultations around eleven themes: inequalities; health; education; growth and employment; environmental sustainability; governance; conflict and fragility; population dynamics; hunger, food and nutrition security; energy; and water.

National consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, often facilitated by UNDP, were conducted in 88 countries in 2012–2013. The Millennium Campaign has also launched an initiative to gather individuals’ inputs online via a website, MyWorld, which applies crowd-sourcing principles to development practices.⁶⁴ As of February 2015, more than 7 million people had cast their votes, either by logging onto the MyWorld site or through national NGOs, telephone companies and other volunteer ‘scouts’ gathering such votes in developing countries. Preliminary results from the global, national and web-based consultations

59 These two tracks have since converged and it is thus likely that the SDGs will constitute the post-2015 development agenda.

60 United Nations, ‘A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development’, Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, May 2013.

61 United Nations General Assembly, ‘Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals’, A/68/970, 12 August 2014. Open Working Group deliberations and documents are available at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html.

62 United Nations, ‘A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda’, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Africa, and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2013.

63 African Union, ‘Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda’, 2013.

64 Myworld2015.org.

were presented in a UNDG report entitled: 'A Million Voices: The World We Want' launched in September 2013.

Given the participatory nature of these consultations, it should come as no surprise that the post-2015 agenda is shaping up to be much wider in scope than the MDGs. It also stresses a number

of issues perceived to have been missing in the MDG framework—in particular, responsive institutions and fundamental freedoms, and places a stronger emphasis on the environment, reflecting growing concerns. However, these proposals have yet to be reviewed and approved by the United Nations Member States, supposedly at the 2015 UN General Assembly.

Box 3. Draft Sustainable Development Goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: 'Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals', A/68/970, August 2014.

Chapter 3

UNDP ROLE AND STRATEGY IN MDG SUPPORT

The previous chapter looked at the process leading to the drafting of the MDGs, a process driven by the Secretary General, and where UNDP played an important supplementary role by co-chairing the inter-agency expert group that drafted the MDGs in 2000. The present chapter turns to UNDP support to MDG implementation, endeavouring to detail—as factually and succinctly as possible—the types of assistance provided, the resources mobilized and the operational tools and institutional arrangements used by the organization to deliver its MDG support.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF UNDP SUPPORT

The same *Road Map* document that enumerated the newly coined MDGs in an appendix had also nominated UNDP as the coordinator of MDG reporting at the country level and UN-DESA as the coordinator for global MDG reports, building on distinct strengths and mandates of the two agencies.⁶⁵ UNDP's roles related to MDG support were further defined in 'The United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy',⁶⁶ elaborated by the United Nations and UNDP and reviewed by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2002. This strategy aimed for the MDGs to become pivotal to United Nations priorities and actions, with UNDP playing its traditional coordination role within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The strategy, which laid out a simple timeline for MDG implementation and reporting by identifying 2005 and 2010 as key milestones to review progress, comprised four elements:

1. **Progress monitoring** against MDG targets (via national and global MDG reports);
2. **Analysis and research** on policies, institutions, investments and strategies necessary to translate the MDGs into practice;
3. **Campaigning and mobilization** of a wide range of partners to build awareness and galvanize public opinion; and
4. **Operational activities** to directly address key constraints to progress towards MDG achievement.

UNDP played a role in all of these areas. In 2001, the Secretary-General nominated the UNDP Administrator to act as the coordinator, the 'campaign manager' (element 3 above) and the 'scorekeeper' (aka 'monitor', element 1 above) of the MDG and MDG support in the UN system. From then, UNDP assumed a central coordination role within the UN system in preparing national MDG reports and in campaigning for the MDGs. UNDP Country Offices led the production of their countries' MDG reports, while a newly established Millennium Campaign Unit handled MDG advocacy.

Because the MDGs were formulated at the headquarters level, 'The UN and the MDGs: A Core Strategy' argued that the first and foremost awareness-raising need was to secure broad MDG buy-in from Member States, development actors and the public, proposing a clear methodology for approaching a broad range of actors and securing their collaboration.⁶⁷ In particular, the

65 United Nations, 'Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration', Report of the Secretary-General, A/56/326, September 2001.

66 United Nations, 'The United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy', Office of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2002.

67 Ibid.

strategy strongly advocated for civil society outreach in order to tap into its mobilization capacity and “hold leaders accountable for their promises.”

Element 2 in the list above (analysis and research) was initially pursued through the UN Millennium Project (UNMP), a team of dedicated analysts housed at UNDP Headquarters from 2002 to 2006 and headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, whom Kofi Annan nominated as his Special Advisor on the MDGs. The first task of the UNMP was to collaborate with the UNDP Human Development Report unit in the preparation of the MDG-focused Human Development Report 2003.

Finally, UNDP also managed a number of trust funds supporting either headquarter-based or field-based activities related to the MDGs, notably the Millennium Trust Fund established in 2002 to support the implementation of the UN strategy; the Spain-United Nations MDG Achievement Fund, set up in 2007 with a \$900 million contribution from Spain⁶⁸ to fund joint MDG programming by several UN agencies and promote the One United Nations approach; and the Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund, established in November 2009 to support MDG achievement in least developed countries.

In summary, UNDP has endeavoured to play six ‘MDG roles’ to support national efforts during the period under review:

1. **Coordination and mobilization of UN support to the MDG agenda**, with convening and facilitation roles at the country level through the Resident Coordinator system, and at the global level through UNDG;
2. **MDG communication, advocacy and campaigning** to raise awareness and mobilize the required energy and resources at the global, regional and country levels;
3. **MDG monitoring and reporting**, or ‘score-keeping’, with a lead role at the country level in partnership with governments, UN agencies and international financial institutions, and a contributing role at regional and global level;
4. **MDG-based policy analysis and advice** at the national and subnational levels, supporting national and local governments;
5. **MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) design and rollout** at the global and country levels; and
6. **Related operational activities and projects** aiming to support achievement of all or some MDGs.

This typology of six UNDP MDG-related roles was used throughout this evaluation and informed data collection tools and analysis. While these roles can be described individually, they are closely interlinked in practice. Most often, UNDP delivered a package of services, integrating multiple roles at the country level. Section 3.2 describes how the emphasis placed on each individual role evolved over time; Section 3.3 addresses each role in greater detail.

3.2 EVOLUTION OVER TIME

The focus of UNDP support to MDG achievement has evolved over time. Three phases are discernible schematically:⁶⁹

- **Phase 1—2001 to 2005: Campaign and research.** Before the MDGs were widely known, UNDP focused on raising awareness and ensuring stakeholder buy-in through a series of advocacy initiatives managed by the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC). In parallel, the United Nations Millennium Project (UNMP) took charge

68 This amounts to the largest ever single contribution of a donor country to the UN system. The MDG-F closed, as scheduled, in 2013 and has been replaced by the SDG Fund in 2014.

69 These phases represent a simplification of a more complex reality. For example, UNDP has supported MDG-based national planning, including related to PRSPs, since 2002. Although campaigning notably decreased after 2006, it nonetheless continued, for example with the Stand Up Against Poverty campaign.

of identifying policy options and investment strategies that could help translate the MDGs into practice, including through an analysis of the macroeconomics of MDG-consistent programming. The UNMP operated quite independently from the rest of UNDP until 2006, when it was integrated into the MDG Support Cluster at the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy.

- **Phase 2—2006 to 2009: Mainstreaming the MDGs in national policies.** After the 2005 World Summit urged countries to adopt and implement MDG-aligned development strategies, the emphasis of UNDP support moved to policy advisory services in order to help countries develop such strategies (including PRSPs) through MDG needs assessments, estimating specific country costs of MDG achievement (MDG costing), preparing MDG-consistent macroeconomic frameworks and aligning poverty reduction strategies to the MDGs.
- **Phase 3—2010 to 2015: Accelerating progress.** UNDP studies⁷⁰ published in preparation for the 2010 MDG Summit led to the UNDP MDG Breakthrough Strategy,⁷¹ which encapsulated the MAF. UNDP has since concentrated on MAF support to specific countries in the achievement of lagging MDGs and has contributed to the development of the post-2015 development agenda.

This evolution can be traced in UNDP Executive Board decisions and strategic planning documents. While Executive Board decision 2002/8 merely “recognizes the important role of UNDP in the implementation of the international development goals and targets of the Millennium

Declaration,” decisions 2003/8 and 2004/28 stress that the main role of UNDP in helping advance the MDGs is “to support national development plans and priorities and the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) where they exist, taking into account UNDP comparative advantages in capacity building, advisory services and awareness-raising, as well as in coordinating the United Nations system at the country level and through the United Nations Development Group.” Decision 2007/5 “urges UNDP to clarify, where relevant, the relationship between national human development reports and other reports such as the Millennium Development Goal reports and poverty reduction strategy papers in order that they better complement each other,” while 2007/32 “reaffirms that support to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, should be the basis of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008–2011.” Similar decisions in 2008, 2009 and 2010⁷² have urged UNDP “to give top priority to achieving Millennium Development Goals and reducing human poverty.”

The UNDP multi-year funding framework for 2004–2007 stated that its strategic goals were “influenced by the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, which represent the overarching basis for all UNDP activities over this period.”⁷³ One of the framework’s four goals—“achieving MDGs and reducing human poverty”⁷⁴—aimed to support upstream pro-poor policy reform and poverty monitoring framed within the MDGs. At the country level, UNDP aimed to work with national partners to develop national MDG targets, establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms, plan MDG

70 See, for example, UNDP, ‘Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the MDGs’, January 2010, and UNDP, ‘What Will it Take to Reach the MDGs: an International Assessment’, September 2010.

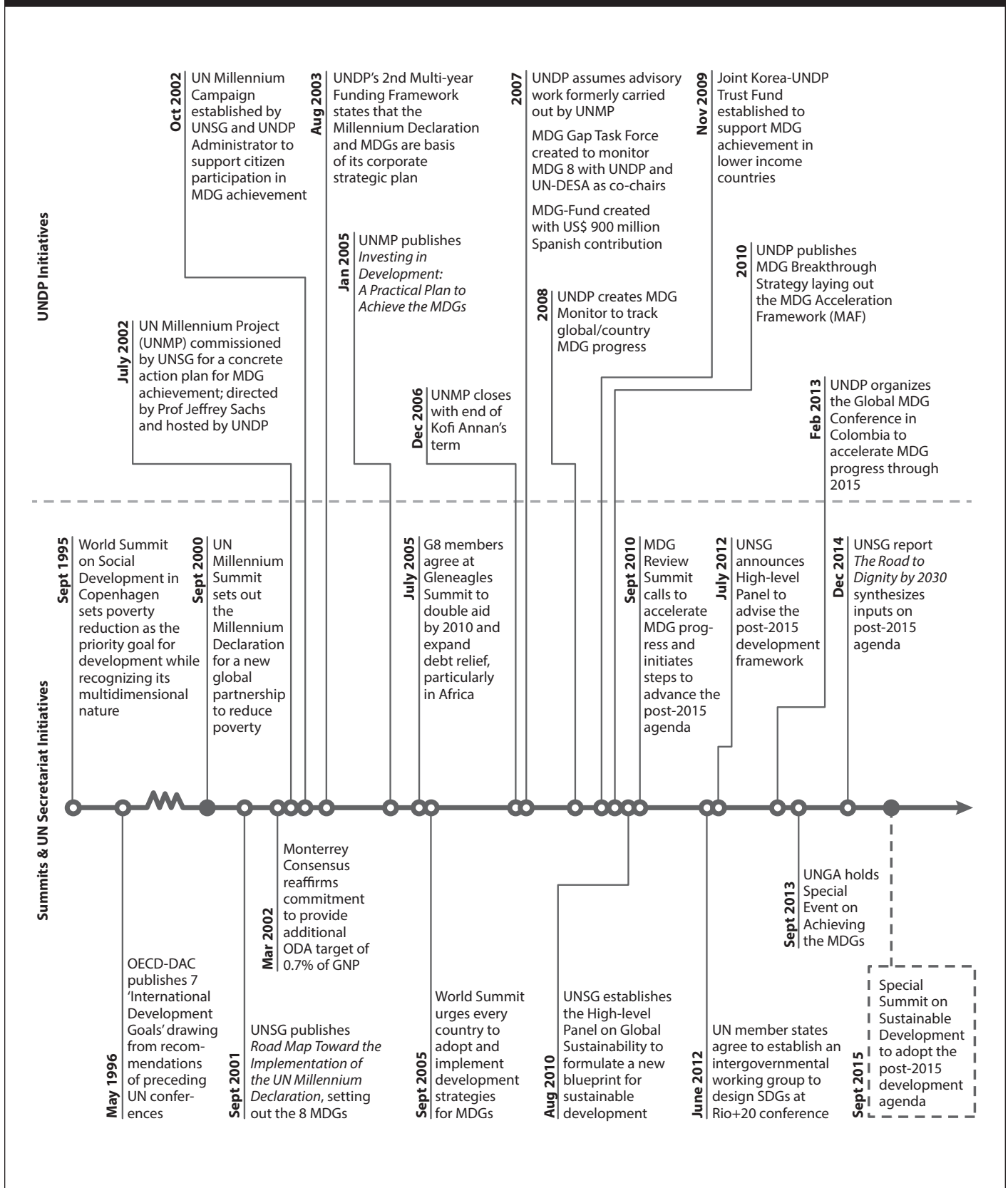
71 UNDP, ‘UNDP’s MDG Breakthrough Strategy: Accelerate and Sustain MDG Progress’, May 2010.

72 Decisions 2008/14 & 15, 2009/9, and 2010/13. UNDP Executive Board decisions can be found at: undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/executive_board/decisions_of_theboard.html.

73 UNDP, ‘Second Multi-Year Funding Framework, 2004–2007’, DP/2003/32, August 2003.

74 The same or similar formulation tying MDGs and poverty alleviation was used in UNDP documents over the years to describe one of the focus areas of the organization.

Figure 4. Timeline of Key MDG-related Events



reports, mobilize public support, and help identify achievements and prevailing challenges.

The subsequent UNDP Strategic Plan for 2008–2011⁷⁵ highlighted “the urgent need for additional efforts by the international community” to achieve the MDGs by 2015 for all developing countries, and particularly for the least developed or land-locked countries and small island states. Among the areas of UNDP support, the plan set out to integrate the pursuit of the MDGs into national development strategies and to “analyse data to help governments decide on the relative prioritization and allocation of resources for health, education, irrigation, transport, and other sectors.”⁷⁶

With the 2010 Midterm Review⁷⁷ of the UNDP Strategic Plan and its extension to 2013,⁷⁸ UNDP adjusted its development results framework to better align with the new MAF approach. The following 2014–2017 Strategic Plan⁷⁹ placed less emphasis on the MDGs, as its timeline spans a period that extends beyond the MDGs into the post-2015 era. The plan recognized that there would continue to be gaps in MDG progress moving into the post-2015 period; however, it used language and selected areas of focus consistent with the emerging post-2015 agenda, such as reducing inequalities and exclusion and pursuing sustainable development pathways.

Three outputs under the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework are of relevance to this evaluation:

- 7.1. Global consensus on completion of MDGs and the post 2015 agenda informed

by contributions from UNDP;

- 7.2. Global and national data collection, measurement and analytical systems in place; and
- 7.3. National development plans to address poverty and inequality.

3.3 UNDP MDG ROLES IN DETAIL

This section summarizes the UNDP approach to MDG support and key achievements for each role the agency played during the evaluated period.

ROLE 1: COORDINATOR

As UNDG Chair and manager of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system, UNDP was mandated by the Secretary-General to act as the UN system coordinator of national MDG activities.⁸⁰ At the country level, MDG coordination translated into convening forums and facilitating processes involving the UN Country Team in MDG scorekeeping, campaigning or programming. Beyond the UNCT, UNDP supported country-based aid coordination and management processes that aimed to enhance alignment of aid with national priorities, including the MDGs, and to mobilize implementation resources (e.g. through donor roundtables).

At the global level, UNDP’s coordination role often took the form of facilitating UN-wide consensus over strategic directions, as well as in knowledge management. Examples of the former include the role UNDP played to coordinate the inputs of UN agencies through various MDG-related fora, from the selection of the MDGs

75 The Strategic Plan replaced the Multi-Year Funding Framework as the core UNDP strategic planning document.

76 UNDP, ‘Strategic Plan, 2008–2011’, DP/2007/43/Rev.1.

77 UNDP, ‘Midterm review of the UNDP strategic plan and annual report of the Administrator’, DP/2011/22, April 2011.

78 UNDP, ‘Report of the first regular session of 2009’, DP/2009/9, June 2009.

79 UNDP, ‘UNDP Strategic Plan: 2014–17 – Changing with the World’, undated.

80 The UNDP Administrator is the Chair of UNDG, which comprises 32 UN funds, programmes, agencies and offices, and reports to the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board on the group’s work plan and management of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system. This system is funded and managed by UNDP in more than 130 countries, where Resident Coordinators are the official representatives of the Secretary-General.

themselves, to the development of guidance on MDG reports and the review of the MAF tool (both arranged through UNDG), to the presentations of MAF experiences to the Chief Executive Board. In addition, UNDP provided occasional coordination services at the regional level, for instance its operational and technical support to the MDG Africa Steering and Working Groups setup by the Secretary-General in 2007 at the Heiligendamm G8 Summit to mobilize the UN system, international financial institutions and other major multilateral organizations towards achieving the MDGs.⁸¹

In the area of knowledge management, UNDP hosted a number of online platforms, beginning in January 2002 with MDGNet, the UN system forum for MDG lesson sharing. Online MDGNet discussions fed into specific knowledge products, gathering evidence on specific MDG-related issues.⁸² Over 80 MDGNet digests and updates were published from 2002 to 2010. At the time of this evaluation, MDGNet had approximately 15,000 members, with more than 10,000 considered active. In parallel with MDGNet, the complementary UNDG MDG Policy Network aimed to facilitate identifying technical expertise for Country Offices across UN agencies. UNDP funded the network's operations and provided programmatic resources, producing knowledge products and a website that compiled good practices and maintained rosters of advisers and resources.⁸³ As of 2011, first-generation networks were functionally replaced by knowledge management 2.0 tools, namely the Teamworks website, which hosts the UNDP 'MDG Strategies' and 'Poverty Reduction and MDG Achievement' spaces.

ROLE 2: CAMPAIGN MANAGER

UNDP's campaigning and advocacy role has taken many forms, from the highly prominent activities of the United Nations Millennium Campaign to *ad hoc* international initiatives and national awareness-raising efforts. The Secretary-General formally launched the Millennium Campaign in 2002 as an inter-agency initiative to support citizen participation in achieving the MDGs. The campaign's major outputs involved:

1. Building partnerships with key constituencies active in poverty reduction, such as civil society and faith-based organizations, media outlets and celebrities;
2. Supporting government partners in developing MDG campaign strategies;
3. Organizing awareness-raising events (e.g. the Stand Up campaign); and
4. Managing promotional campaigns (e.g. public service announcements).

Other UNDP 'MDG roles' were meant to contribute to the campaign: the Millennium Project was to identify tailored messages, while it was hoped that the national MDGRs would provide the needed evidence for advocacy.⁸⁴

The campaign aimed to bolster MDG awareness and influence public policy in both the South and the North, reaching out to civil society to strengthen civic mobilization for policy demands and directly lobbying legislators through parliamentary networks, particularly in Africa, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The campaign's work focused on 39 priority countries, a list that has changed slightly over the years, particularly in Africa (see Table 6 for a full list of countries). At the national level, UNDP

81 United Nations, 'The MDG Africa Steering and Working Groups: Objectives and Terms of Reference', September 2007.

82 UNDP, 'Human Rights and the Millennium Development Goals: Making the Link', Oslo Governance Centre, 2006.

83 The UNDG Policy Network for MD/MDGs is available at mdgpolicy.net.undg.org.

84 Otero, Eva, and Brian Cugelman, 'UN Millennium Campaign: External Evaluation', 2009.

supported initiatives that attempted to raise the profile of the MDGs through awards, government-appointed ‘MDG ambassadors’, volunteer MDG campaign units and other initiatives linked (or not) to the global campaign.

Starting in 2005, the United Nations Millennium Campaign increasingly focused on mass events, mainly through the Stand Up Against Poverty campaign. A similar move was the launch of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) at the January 2005 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. The GCAP coalition, which works through 75 national platforms, partnered with the Millennium Campaign to organize three ‘White Band Days’ for global mobilization, with the first White Band Day timed to coincide with the July 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit. A number of concerts were organized in various countries under the name ‘Live 8’, and the Millennium Campaign co-organized an event at London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral, where Secretary-General Kofi Annan, United Kingdom Chancellor Gordon Brown and Kenyan activist Wahu Kara⁸⁵ urged world leaders to deliver on the MDGs. The second and third White Band Days were organized around the

September 2005 UN General Assembly in New York and the World Trade Organization’s ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December 2005.

Recent advocacy campaigns, such as the international Goodwill Ambassadors⁸⁶ and the MDG Momentum countdown,⁸⁷ seek to raise awareness in promoting poverty reduction and MDG achievement, as well as ensure that UNDP messaging and work in these areas are broadcast globally. The Millennium Campaign has also spearheaded the MyWorld 2015 global survey to inform the post-2015 development agenda.

ROLE 3: SCOREKEEPER

The Secretary-General tasked UNDP with coordinating national reporting on MDG progress.⁸⁸ Country MDG reports (MDGRs) have been prepared since 2001, aiming primarily to engage political leaders, promote a vigorous national debate on development and inform the public of progress towards MDG targets.

The first country MDGRs were prepared by the UNCT under UNDP leadership. By 2002, they began to be published jointly with the

Table 6. Priority Countries for the UN Millennium Campaign

Priority	East Africa	West Africa	Southern Africa	Asia	North
1	Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal	Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines	France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, United States
2	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda	Liberia, Sierra Leone	Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe	Cambodia, China, Papua New Guinea, Fiji	Australia, Austria, Canada, Japan

Source: Otero and Cugelman (2009)

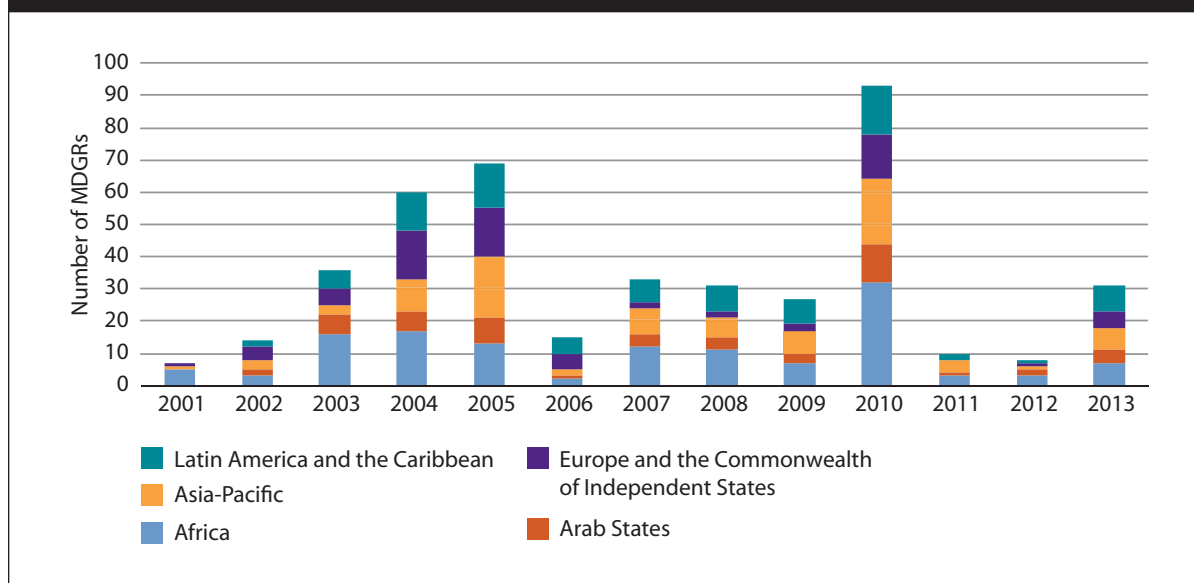
85 Wahu Kaara is a Kenyan educator and political activist. She was then serving as the Ecumenical Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals in the All Africa Conference of Churches.

86 UNDP, ‘Annual Report 2011/2012: The Sustainable Future We Want’, 2012, p.27.

87 UNDP, MDG Momentum website, available at undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/get_involved/MDGMomentum, last accessed November 2014.

88 United Nations, ‘Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration’, Report of the Secretary-General, A/56/326, September 2001. See also United Nations, ‘Note to Mr. Malloch Brown: Country-Level Monitoring of MDGs’, Secretary-General, November 2001. The coordination of MDG reports at the global level is under the responsibility of UN-DESA, while regional MDG reports are coordinated by UN regional commissions, often in collaboration with UNDP.

Figure 5. Number of National MDGRs Produced by Year, 2001–2013



concerned governments. In this respect, MDGRs also attempted to build national capacity to measure progress towards MDG targets and to strengthen national MDG ownership through an inclusive process of benchmarking indicators, defining national targets and identifying challenges.⁸⁹ Specifically, the national MDG reports were meant to follow the following four principles:

1. Broad national ownership based on close consultation and collaboration with all relevant institutions, including the government, civil society, foundations and the private sector;
2. Full involvement of UN agencies and regional commissions, IMF, the World Bank, regional development banks, the European Commission and bilateral donors;
3. Recognition of data already collected and analysed through a consultative process among development partners and reported in national poverty reduction strategy

papers, Human Development Reports, UN Common Country Assessments and other reports, assessments and strategies prepared by the government, academic or research institutions, civil society organizations, treaty bodies and external partners; and

4. Support to national capacity for data collection, analysis and application.⁹⁰

During the evaluated period, an estimated 450 country MDGRs were produced, most with significant UNDP input.⁹¹ There were large spikes in reporting in the run-up to the 2005 and 2010 UN summits (see Figure 5). Most MDGRs (90 percent) originated in low- and middle-income countries; 30 percent were from Africa. Subnational MDGRs were also produced in certain contexts, including by municipalities aiming to adapt certain MDG targets to the local level and benchmark progress across relevant outcomes.⁹² In addition, local NGOs produced

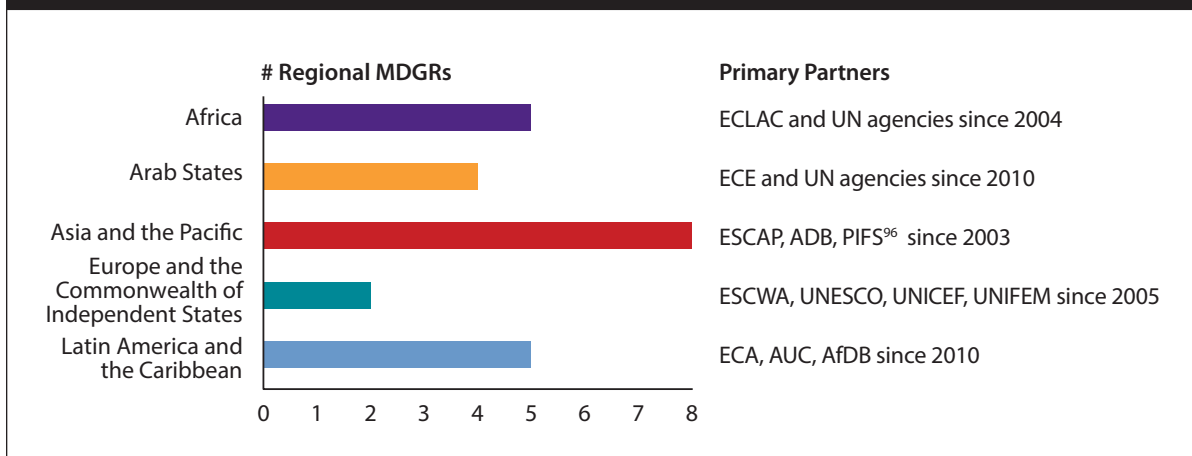
⁸⁹ United Nations, 'Status of Millennium Development Goals Country Reporting: Note by the Secretary-General', Statistical Commission, E/CN.3/2003/22, 6 December 2002.

⁹⁰ United Nations, 'The United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy', Office of the Secretary-General, June 2002.

⁹¹ This number includes several donor reports focused on assessing the degree of MDG alignment of their programmes. UNDP was typically not associated with such reports.

⁹² See for example the Tbilisi Municipality, 'Tbilisi MDG Report', June 2007. old.undp.org/ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=24&info_id=169.

Figure 6. Regional MDGRs



Source: UNDP website

‘shadow’ MDGRs in a number of countries (in some cases with Millennium Campaign support).

UN-DESA leads the collation of global MDG reports using UN agency data.⁹³ Each indicator is assigned to the specialized UN agency with the best capabilities and data on the subject. Although represented in the Inter-Agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by UN-DESA, UNDP has no mandate, history or culture in global statistics management (beyond the somewhat particular case of the Human Development Index). As such, the UNDP role in global MDG reporting is limited to backstopping the process and contributing to report dissemination.

At this global level, UNDP also developed a website called the ‘MDG Monitor’ in partnership with the UN and external partners as a tool for policymakers, development practitioners, and the media to track progress toward the Goals.⁹⁴ Launched in 2007, the website has unfortunately not been updated since 2009.

Since 2008, and in partnership with UN-DESA, UNDP has also coordinated the global MDG Gap Task Force, which brings together more than 20 UN agencies and reports annually on progress towards Goal 8.⁹⁵ Under this initiative, UN-DESA and UNDP also launched the Integrated Implementation Framework in 2012 to track commitments made at international forums and elsewhere.

At the regional level, UNDP contributed to the production of regional MDGRs to highlight common challenges and different achievement levels across diverse regional development contexts. UN regional commissions generally co-led these publication processes with UNDP, regional governmental bodies and a wide array of UN partners. A total of 24 regional MDGRs were published from 2003 to 2013 (Figure 6).

ROLE 4: MDG-BASED NATIONAL PLANNING

This role was considered pivotal to the translation of the global MDG agenda into action at the

93 UN-DESA, Global MDGRs, un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml.

94 mdgmonitor.org, accessed on 30 December 2014.

95 Since MDG 8 (a global partnership for development) pertains to international cooperation, it is rarely assessed in MDGRs at the country level. The MDG Gap Report is available at un.org/en/development/desa/policy/mdg_gap/index.shtml.

96 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

national and local levels. The relevant UNDP literature recognizes the top-down manner in which UN member states agreed to the initial goals and the need for national and subnational ownership of development plans to bridge regional, socio-economic, gender and ethnic inequalities.⁹⁷

UNDP identified national development policies as a key initial entry point, with particular emphasis on PRSPs. UNDP had been involved in helping governments prepare PRSPs since 2002, and these documents were obvious candidates for alignment with the MDGs. The first order of business was to help countries tailor MDG targets to their specific national contexts, a step initially referred to as 'MDG localization'.⁹⁸ This localization step aimed to translate global targets into locally achievable but ambitious-enough goals, a necessity given that the MDGs are relative benchmarks (e.g. halving extreme poverty will be more difficult in countries with higher poverty rates). Generally, UNDP Country Offices supported such localization efforts upon the demand of national governments opting to adapt the Goals.

At the global level, initial research carried out by the Millennium Project sought to demonstrate that the MDGs were achievable and to identify the steps needed to meet them. The project convened 10 thematic Task Forces with attendance from all relevant UN agencies, which oversaw research within their respective fields of expertise and piloted methods to integrate the MDGs into national planning systems in several countries, including through MDG needs assessments and costing exercises. The results, published in 2005, asserted that the MDGs were achievable but

required targeted technical support and investment in many countries, especially the poorest.⁹⁹ The report presented Millennium Project research on possible approaches and methods that governments, donors, the UN and UNDP could rollout on a large scale to help reach the MDGs, and on the resources needed to achieve the Goals while avoiding the so-called 'Dutch disease'.¹⁰⁰ The report also argued that in order to achieve rapid progress, the international community ought to implement 'quick win' interventions in areas that could see major results within three years or less (e.g. free school meals and provision of insecticide-treated bed nets).

Beginning in 2006 in a number of priority countries, UNDP integrated the Millennium Project-devised approach to MDG-based national planning support. This approach had the following three steps:

1. **MDG needs assessment** (or MDG costing) to evaluate the resources and policy changes needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015;
2. **MDG-based long-term planning** towards 2015; and
3. **MDG-based medium-term national strategy** for a three- to five-year period (see Figure 7).

In practice, the second step was often omitted. The third step inserted and mainstreamed national MDG targets and associated policies in the most relevant medium-term national development strategies (often national PRSPs, particularly in the beginning).¹⁰¹

97 UNDP, 'Localizing the MDGs for Effective Integrated Local Development: An Overview of Practices and Lessons Learned', undated.

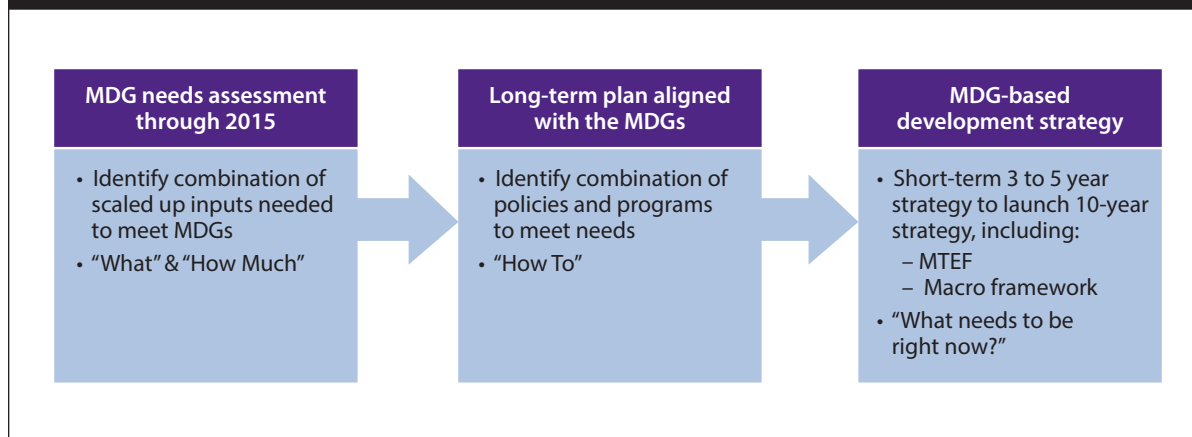
98 Later on, once many countries had already tailored the Goals to their national context, the term 'localization' tended to be used to describe a finer level of local adaptation: the subnational level. In other words, the 'locale' referred to in 'MDG localization' can refer either to the country or the subnational level, depending on the context and period when the term was used.

99 United Nations, 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals', Millennium Project, New York, 2005.

100 'Dutch disease' refers to the unanticipated effect of a resource boom or foreign capital inflows that cause real wage increases or exchange rate appreciations that reduce competitiveness.

101 Vandemoortele, Jan, 'Are MDGs and PRSPs Competing Acronyms?', UNDP, September 2002.

Figure 7. UNDP Approach to MDG-based National Planning



Sources: Millennium Project (2005); Gonzalo Pizarro (2013)

Costing support differed across economic contexts. In the majority of least developed countries that went through this process, UNDP used bottom-up costing, a method developed by the Millennium Project and based on calculating the costs of the infrastructure and human resources necessary to provide a level of social services sufficient to reach the MDGs. Another methodology, called MAMS for MAquette for MDG Simulations, was developed by the World Bank with inputs from UN-DESA and UNDP. It was often favoured in middle-income countries, including in UNDP work (e.g. in Latin America and among Arab States).¹⁰²

As of January 2007, the Millennium Project’s advisory work was assumed by the newly created MDG Support Cluster within the Poverty Group of the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy. This cluster assisted countries in preparing and implementing MDG-based national development strategies and further developed costing tools to quantify the specific financial and human resources needed, as well as infrastructure required, to meet the MDGs.

ROLE 5: SUBNATIONAL PLANNING

Around 2004, UNDP began to recognize the importance of also translating the MDGs into relevant and attainable goals at the subnational level as well.¹⁰³ UNDP partnered with the Netherlands Development Organisation, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to help local governments, civil society and other organizations draw up and implement MDG-based local plans.¹⁰⁴ In 2010, this partnership organized the first Global Forum on Local Development. Held in Uganda, the forum resulted in the Kampala Call to Action, which urged national governments, development partners, local governments and the private sector to partner in designing and financing local development strategies that contribute to MDG achievement.

The ART Initiative,¹⁰⁵ launched by UNDP in 2005, represents another channel through which UNDP supported decentralization and territorial

102 See Lofgren, Hans, et. al., ‘MAMS: An Economy-Wide Model for Analysis of MDG Country Strategies – An Application to Latin America and the Caribbean’, 2005, available at un.org/en/development/desa/policy/mdg_workshops/entebbe_training_mdgs/ntbtraining/lofgren_diazbonilla2010.pdf.

103 For example, UNDP published the ‘Toolkit for Localising the MDGs: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource’ in 2005.

104 UNCDF, ‘Delivering the Goods: Building Local Capacity to Achieve the MDGs’, 2005.

105 Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Sustainable Human Development.

development policies. Unlike UNCDF, whose mandate is limited to the least developed countries, ART can also support decentralization processes in middle-income nations.

Subnational MDG projects were implemented from 2004 to 2014 in many UNDP programme countries through awareness-raising and capacity development activities. These projects resulted in the production of subnational MDG-based plans, efforts to monitor municipal and district progress towards MDG targets and training of local stakeholders (i.e. civil society organizations, community leaders, the business sector, elected representatives and government bodies).

ROLE 6: MDG ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK (MAF)

The onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 led to growing concern about the ability to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and even about potential reversals in development gains already attained. In 2009, UNDP initiated a forward-looking assessment of factors shaping progress towards the MDGs at the country level, bottlenecks and constraints slowing progress, and how UNDP can best support development partners to make MDG achievement a reality. In preparation for the 2010 UN Summit, UNDP developed the *MDG Breakthrough Strategy* in 2010 and presented the MAF to help countries overcome slow and uneven progress to meet the 2015 deadline. The MAF was a tool developed by UNDP—and later sanctioned by the UNDG as a UN tool—as an attempt to draw lessons from past experience and focus on what worked going forward. Other UN agencies contributed to fine tuning the MAF tool during its rollout in 10 pilot countries and during the technical peer review in 2010. The September 2010 UN Summit on the MDGs

concluded with the adoption of a global action plan to accelerate progress towards the eight goals, followed by UNDG endorsing the MAF in December 2010.

The MAF involved a cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder process, including: 1) the identification of a ‘lagging MDG’ in discussions with the government; 2) the identification and analysis of bottlenecks for MDG progress (including policy issues) with the concerned government and UNCT; 3) the development of a government Plan of Action to address such bottlenecks; and 4) the implementation of that Plan of Action. UNDP produced technical guidance with a toolkit and operational note¹⁰⁶ to support of the MAF rollout.

As of 2013, the MAF process had been or was being implemented in 59 countries (see Table 7). The process started with 10 pilot countries in 2010. UNDP proposed to implement a MAF in most programme countries, which was then validated by government partners and United Nations Country Teams. Goal 1 and Goal 5 represent approximately two thirds of the MAFs whose sector had been determined thus far, indicating that these two goals were often identified as lagging.

At the 68th UN General Assembly in September 2013, UNDP and the World Bank hosted a high-level event entitled *Tackling the Unfinished Business: Accelerating MDG Progress*, with the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea.¹⁰⁷ The event aimed to provide a platform for stepping up political commitment and momentum for action to accelerate MDG achievement. Upon proposal of the World Bank President, the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)¹⁰⁸ has also been reviewing implementation gaps of country MAF plans

106 UNDP, ‘MDG Acceleration Framework’, November 2011; and UNDP, ‘MDG Acceleration Framework: Operational Note’, BDP, October 2011.

107 UNDP, ‘2013 – A Defining Moment for Achieving the MDGs’, Press Release, 24 September 2013.

108 The UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination brings together the Executive Heads of the United Nations 11 Funds and Programmes, 17 specialized agencies and related organizations, including the World Bank and the IMF, under the chairmanship of the United Nations Secretary-General. It meets twice a year to further coordination and cooperation on a wide range of substantive and management issues concerning the UN system as a whole.

since 2013, seeking to provide coherent and meaningful support for MAF implementation.

In addition, UNDP organized national and international conferences, such as the 2013 Global MDG Conference¹⁰⁹ that gathered participants—including government representatives ranging from technical expert to ministerial levels—to share experiences on ‘what works’ in accelerating progress towards MDG achievement.

ROLE 7: DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AIMED AT ACHIEVING ALL OR SOME MDGS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

This area of UNDP support is somewhat of a ‘loose bag’ of projects geared towards MDG achievement at the national or local level. These initiatives generally aim to advance socio-economic outcomes in targeted geographic areas that are lagging behind. To this end, UNDP has supported a range of interventions that target

Table 7. List of Countries with a MAF Process

MDG	Countries
Africa (24 countries)	
1:	Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Tanzania, Togo
3:	Malawi
5:	Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa, Uganda, Mauritania
7:	Benin (access to water)
Various:	Burundi (4 and 5), Ghana (5 and 7), Zambia (1 and 7: poverty-environment nexus)
To be determined:	Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Senegal
Arab States (3 countries)	
1:	Jordan (food security)
To be determined:	Sudan, Yemen
Asia and the Pacific (13 countries)	
1:	Bhutan (youth employment)
5:	Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines
7:	Nepal (access to water and sanitation)
Various:	Bangladesh (1 and 2 in the Chittagong Hill Tracts), Cambodia (1 and 3: women’s economic empowerment), Lao PDR (2 and 3: education)
To be determined:	Maldives, Pakistan, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
Europe and the CIS (7 countries)	
1:	Armenia (employment), Tajikistan (energy to reduce poverty)
6:	Moldova, Ukraine
To be determined:	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro
Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries)	
1:	Costa Rica (employment for the disabled)
5:	El Salvador, Peru
7:	Belize
Various:	Colombia (2 territories, 4 provinces, and numerous municipalities)
To be determined:	Anguilla, Cook Islands, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico

109 For peer-reviewed UNDP working paper series from the 2013 Global MDG Conference, see: undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/2013-global-mdg-conference-working-paper-series.

Box 4. The Millennium Villages Project

The Millennium Villages are a set of 12 rural localities (each village is, in fact, a grouping of hamlets totaling about 5,000 people) receiving significant and prolonged support to lift them out of poverty and demonstrate that MDGs can be achieved at a reasonable cost. Initiated in 2006 by the Columbia University's Earth Institute (headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs), the villages were later expanded under UNDP implementation from 2007 to 2011. UNDP has since withdrawn from the project.

In Senegal, for instance, the municipality of Leona has benefited from five new health centres, a medical laboratory, 18.5 km of tracks, 1,800 improved latrines and the connection of 38 schools and more than 1,200 houses to a water supply system. Access to safe water and latrines is now almost universal in the area, and the gross enrolment ratio in primary school has risen from 77 to 88 percent from 2006 to 2009. Nevertheless, the country cannot sustain the project's high unit costs, and local officials have expressed concerns about sustaining newly established services after the project is withdrawn.

Source: UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Senegal', Independent Evaluation Office, 2011.

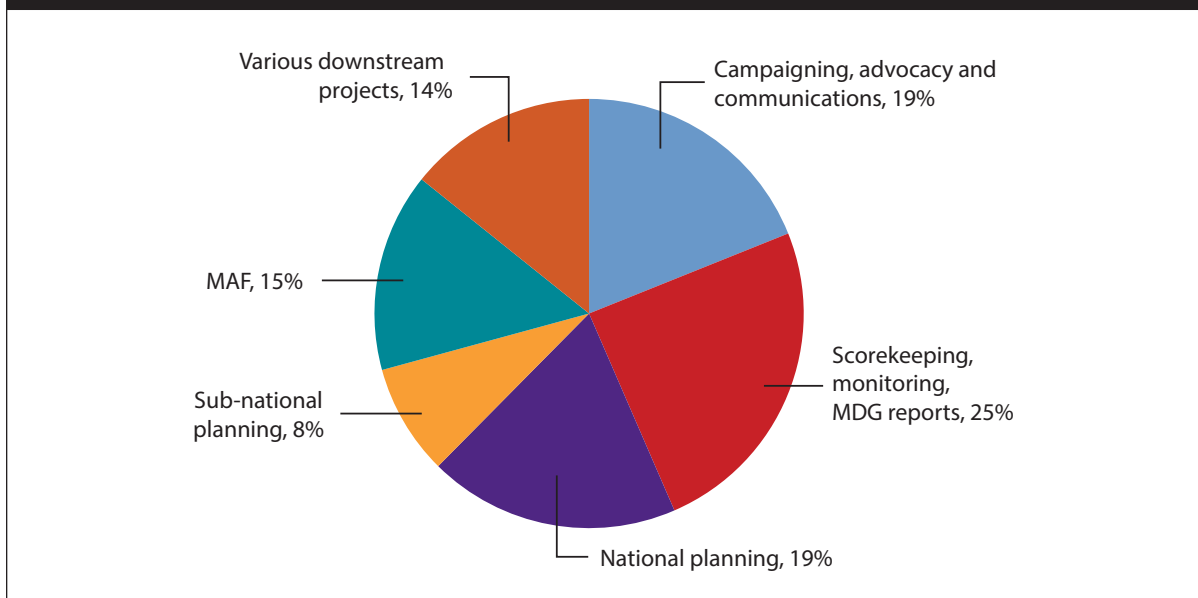
improved social service delivery at the local level. In Africa, UNDP supported the implementation of area-based development programmes and local development projects, such as the Millennium Villages Project (see Box 4).

Projects funded by the MDG Achievement Fund and the Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund also fall in this category. Most of these projects are outside the scope of this evaluation, which focuses principally on initiatives to help national governments achieve the MDGs.

In the survey of MDG-involved staff and consultants conducted as part of this evaluation, three roles accounted for 63 percent of the answers: campaigning, monitoring and national planning. Subnational planning was the least practised role, accounting for only 8 percent of all described contributions (see Figure 8), an observation confirmed through other sources of information, including the country case studies.

The manner in which respondents selected different combinations of roles that they performed helped understand which roles have closer

Figure 8. MDG Roles Played by Survey Respondents



programmatic linkages. Having worked in MDG-aligned national and subnational planning was strongly correlated with having supported the MAF, which suggests that the MAF is connected to the national and subnational MDG planning work. The weakest correlations were observed between participation in local development projects and all other areas of MDG work, perhaps indicating that there was little programmatic convergence between policy work and local-level projects. In any case, those UNDP staff who worked in local development projects were unlikely to have contributed to other MDG-related roles.

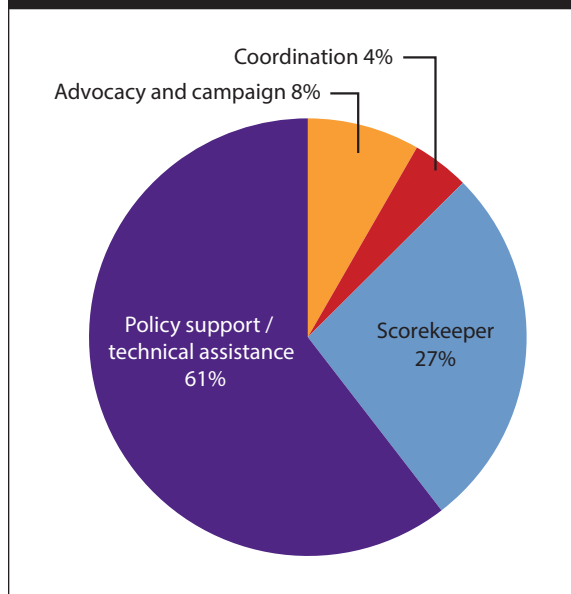
3.4 FINANCING UNDP SUPPORT TO MDG ACHIEVEMENT

The financial scale and geographic scope of work related to the UNDP role in country-level MDG support was extensive. UNDP used a number of financing modalities, notably trust funds, and partnered with donors, governments and other external organizations to mobilize resources. Precisely defining the extent of this financial support was somewhat of a challenge, given the long-term and multilayered nature of MDG support and because much of what UNDP does could be argued to contribute to the MDGs—even in the thematic area of good governance.

As the main criterion to demarcate the scope of UNDP MDG support, this evaluation used the degree to which a given intervention supported holistic country-level processes concerning all or most MDGs, excluding therefore activities in support of one particular sector (e.g. environmental projects and humanitarian assistance). The MAF remained within the evaluation scope, because in principle, it consists of a review of progress towards all MDGs. This review then leads to a focusing on a specific goal that is lagging and generating a strong push towards attaining it, so that a country can succeed in reaching all MDGs by 2015.

Based on a review of how UNDP projects are mapped to corporate outcomes related to the evaluation scope, the evaluation arrived at an estimate of \$1.3 billion for the body of work under

Figure 9. UNDP Expenditures on MDG Support, Broken Down by Role



review. This estimate represents an order of magnitude rather than a precise tally. A search for MDG-related projects using known roles and keywords and excluding work outside of the evaluation's scope (e.g. Millennium Villages or MDG Achievement Fund activities) yielded a conservative estimate of \$490 million in expenditure from 2004 to 2014. A higher figure was derived from the total expenditures reported under the related corporate outcomes, which yielded an estimate of \$6.3 billion over the same period. In order to arrive at a more precise estimate, the evaluation team then reviewed in detail the list of projects linked to the relevant corporate outcomes in 15 countries and found that this dataset included a wide range of activities falling outside the evaluation's scope (e.g. humanitarian support, sector-based programmes, political and electoral support, Millennium Villages and MDG Achievement Fund programmes). Some of the largest UNDP country programmes included 95 to 99 percent of funding linked to related corporate outcomes but unrelated to the narrower evaluation's scope (e.g. programmes in Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq). Excluding such activities yielded a total estimate of \$1.3 billion for activities within the evaluation scope.

Figure 9 presents an expenditure breakdown by UNDP MDG role, based on the project keyword search in corporate databases. An estimated 61 percent of all resources went to policy support and technical assistance, while 27 percent went to scorekeeping.

Expenditures attributed to different UNDP roles also varied geographically. Global activities accounted for an estimated 11 percent of total expenditures and were geared towards MDG advocacy and coordination.¹¹⁰ Regional activities comprised 9 percent of total expenditures, with the highest spending on policy support and technical assistance. Country programme initiatives accounted for the majority (80 percent) of the estimated \$1.3 billion total MDG support expenditure.

At the regional level, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Senior Economist Programme was the largest policy support programme, with \$46.6 million in expenditures since 2006. The Senior Economist network was an important channel for MDG implementation in Africa and often provided leadership at the country level in carrying out MDG-related programmes. Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 98 percent of regional

spending (or 44, 23 and 31 percent respectively), primarily for technical assistance and policy support for MDG-based planning.

Initial financing for MDG-related work began in 2002, with the \$24.6 million Millennium Trust Fund under the management of the UNDP Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships. The trust fund financed most of the MDG Support Programme's \$34.4 million budget.¹¹¹ Millennium Trust Fund resources were provided only to the Millennium Project, the Millennium Campaign and the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) Poverty Group; Country Offices could access only Millennium Campaign and BDP funds. BDP disbursed funds to Country Offices primarily for MDGRs, poverty monitoring and some statistical capacity building.¹¹²

The Poverty Thematic Trust Fund was a major co-financing window for work under evaluation, including the production of MDGRs, MDG-based national and subnational planning programmes, and the MAF rollout.¹¹³ Acceleration and MDG-based planning activities linked to governance issues were also funded through the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund.¹¹⁴ The UNDP Strategic Reserve Fund financed initial MAF rollouts in more than 30 countries.

Box 5. MDG Achievement Fund

In December 2006, UNDP and the Government of Spain signed an agreement to establish a fund to accelerate efforts to reach the MDGs and support UN reform efforts at the country level. Spain contributed approximately \$900 million that financed 130 joint programmes in 50 countries. UNDP hosted the fund's Steering Committee Secretariat, and the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (also housed in UNDP) acted as the fund's administrative agent. The MDG Achievement Fund was replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals Fund in 2014 and was evaluated separately from this evaluation.

Source: MDG Achievement Fund, mdgfund.org.

110 The Millennium Campaign spent approximately \$64 million during the period under review, while the Millennium Project spent \$12.3 million. Additional financial data from the MDG Support Group was requested but not available by the time of the report's final draft.

111 The total Millennium Trust Fund commitment included UNDP core and non-core resources and contributions from 11 bilateral donors and three foundations.

112 BDP was restructured into the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) in 2014.

113 UNDP, Poverty Thematic Trust Fund Annual Reports for 2010 and 2011.

114 UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, Annual Reports from 2007 to 2011.

Finally, the Republic of Korea contributed \$22.85 million to set up the Korea–UNDP MDG Trust Fund, which at the time of evaluation managed 10 country projects and 5 global projects seeking to improve livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable. Other bilateral partnerships—including the Spain–United Nations MDG Achievement Fund (see Box 5)—led to funding for specific initiatives.

3.5 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The cross-sectoral nature of the MDGs and their ambitious global implementation scale meant that UNDP needed to muster a significant organizational response. The institutional framework supporting MDG programmes evolved over time, along with changes to the UNDP administrative structure and programmatic approach. At the headquarters level, MDG programmes were conceptualized and managed largely by the BDP Poverty Group since 2001. During early phases, the Poverty Group developed programmes and mobilized resources in partnership with the UNDP Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships (BRSP), which managed the Millennium Trust Fund. BRSP was equally central in designing UN-wide approaches such as the ‘The United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy’ in 2002.

UNDP had administrative responsibility of the UN Millennium Project and the UN Millennium Campaign, but both initiatives operated with relative autonomy in their programmatic affairs as advisory bodies. This ‘satellite’ implementation structure aimed to make the Millennium Project more of a UN-wide effort rather than an exclusive UNDP outfit.¹¹⁵ The Millennium Project worked in collaboration with a large number of specialized UN agencies and multilateral

partners, holding biannual advisory board meetings with the United Nations and IMF and the World Bank’s chief economists. The Millennium Campaign also adopted a similar ‘satellite structure’ in a deliberate attempt to reach out to civil society, identified early on as an important audience to hold governments accountable for their promises. The core UN strategy went as far as to recommend that the Millennium Campaign Unit operates “at arms-length to regular UN bodies” in order to better attract civil society organizations.¹¹⁶

The first director of the Campaign was Eveline Herfkens (2002–2007), ex-Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands who helped reach out to northern (mainly European) civil society. The campaign’s top priority countries were in Europe, notably Italy and later Spain, under the rationale that pressure needed to be brought to bear on rich countries to increase their willingness to comply with Goal 8 promises. The Spanish Campaign was officially launched in 2004, along with the appointments of the first United States and Africa outreach coordinators.

In 2003, the appointment of Salil Shetty, a recognized civil society leader from the South, to the post of Director of the Millennium Campaign and Erna Witoelar’s nomination for Special Ambassador to the MDGs for Asia and the Pacific signalled an interest in expanding the campaign’s reach towards developing nations.¹¹⁷ Shetty’s mission included reaching out to southern civil society and NGO networks, as it was felt that developing countries’ governments were already capable of improving the lives of their countries’ poor by using existing domestic and external resources. In December 2003, a meeting held in Maputo, Mozambique, brought together activists from Africa, Asia and Latin America to

115 Some past staff members interviewed for the evaluation also characterized this approach as an attempt to isolate the project from typical UN bureaucracy.

116 United Nations, ‘United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy’, Office of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2002.

117 Salil Shetty is an Indian human rights activist who went on to serve as Secretary-General of Amnesty International. Erna Witoelar is the former Indonesian Minister of Human Settlements and Regional Development (1999–2001). She remained the Special Ambassador for the MDGs for Asia and the Pacific until 2007 and also served as a commissioner of the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor during 2005–2008.

discuss how to move ahead with the campaign. Regional nodal support organizations—Ancefa for West Africa, Awepon for East Africa and Mwengo for Southern Africa—were launched, and two Deputy Directors for Asia and Africa were recruited in 2006. However, the development of these partnerships and elements of a field presence remained *ad hoc*.

While the Millennium Campaign is slated to continue through 2015, the Millennium Project, having completed its mandate, closed in December 2006 at the end of Kofi Annan's tenure as Secretary-General. The MDG Support Cluster, formally established in 2006 as part of the BDP Poverty Group, assumed the tasks and absorbed the personnel of the Millennium Project. The BDP Capacity Development Group, Democratic Governance Group and Gender Group were also actively involved in MDG programmes in their respective areas of expertise.

Several UNDP global programmes have provided advisory support in a number of MDG-related activities, including developing the MDG Breakthrough Strategy and the MAF, as well as supporting the MDG Gap Task Force and UNDP contribution to the post-2015 development agenda.¹¹⁸

The overall UNDP institutional response to the MDGs mirrored the agency's regional architecture. UNDP headquarters provided overall management and guidance at the strategic level,

regional bureaux and service centres designed and implemented MDG programmes tailored to their respective regional contexts, and Country Offices carried out the bulk of MDG programmes at the national level. There were certain regional specificities to UNDP MDG support. Africa started on MDG reports and costing slightly before other regions, reflecting a deliberate prioritization of the region by the Millennium Project. Other regional approaches included: the Senior Economist network and work with international financial institutions on the 'Gleneagles Scenario' in Africa; the MDG Africa Steering Group; partnerships with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank on progress reporting in Africa; work with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to create and monitor South-Asian development goals; the MDG-I regional costing initiative in Asia and the Pacific; and the MAMS-based approach to MDG costing used in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The MDG Steering Committee provided a mechanism for internal guidance on UNDP's strategic direction on MDG work and for internal coordination from 2006 to 2010, gathering senior management and programme staff at headquarters on a monthly basis.¹¹⁹ The MDG Acceleration Group carried forward these functions with an increased focus on exploring possibilities for accelerating country-level MDG progress. Finally, UNDP also co-chaired the UNDG MDG Task Force.

118 UNDP, 'Report on the Global Programme, 2009–2013: Performance and Results', DP/2013/14, April 2013.

119 The MDG Steering Committee was chaired by the UNDP Associate Administrator as part of the Operations Group, which had the participation of all the Deputy Directors of the Regional Bureaux and central bureau to coordinate UNDP's MDG work.

ASSESSMENT OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

This chapter assesses the UNDP contribution to national MDG achievement efforts and identifies factors that reinforced or weakened this contribution. Presented material is organized by the evaluation criteria set out in Chapter 1: relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, efficiency and strategic positioning.

4.1 RELEVANCE

Finding 1. The relevance of UNDP MDG support depended upon the relevance of the MDGs themselves to a country's development context. The MDGs called for the fulfilment of the most basic human needs and were mainly designed with least developed, low-income countries in mind. In view of this, there was initially more government interest in the MDGs in Africa and Asia and the Pacific than in Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States or Latin America and the Caribbean. Competing agendas and priorities influenced relevance in certain countries, including small island developing states and countries experiencing crises.

The MDGs were seen as relevant in many UNDP programme countries that developed strong national ownership of them, particularly low-income countries as well as lower middle income countries. This was to be expected, since the MDGs were designed with the poorest countries in mind, and within countries, the most deprived citizens, as evidence by the initial focus of the UNMP on Africa or by the targets themselves that were raised in many middle-income countries (so-called MDG Plus or MDG+ countries).

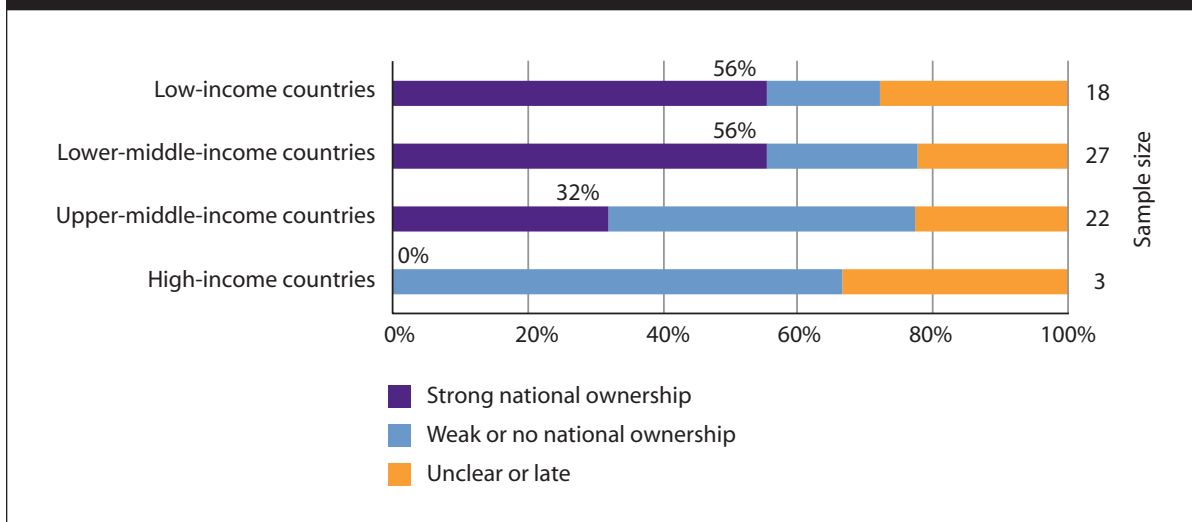
In general, upper-middle-income countries demonstrated less interest (see Figure 10). In cases of use, they generally opted either to raise the targets significantly and/or to use the MDGs at the subnational level to target areas of deprivation (e.g. Albania, Colombia, Indonesia). In Latin America, the initial lack of interest in some countries is also attributable to the 'rise of the South' and a fundamental critique of ODA as donor-driven. But Latin America progressively seized on the Goals, with Brazil as an early and enthusiastic adopter (2003/2004 for the first campaign that designed the now famous MDG icons; see Figure 11). In the Asia-Pacific region, China did not formally adopt the MDGs in their planning documents until 2010. In India, central and state governments set up goals more ambitious than the MDGs, and planning documents did not refer to the MDGs. Finally, the MDGs had some relevance in high-income countries, helping orient ODA but not necessarily national policies.

In countries in special circumstances (e.g. small islands, conflicts, EU accession), competing agendas decreased MDG relevance significantly. Among case study countries, the Barbados Programme of Action and climate change formed an important policy agenda in Belize;¹²⁰ European Union accession quickly came to dominate Albania's policy agenda; and conflicts or political crises in Madagascar, Mali and Sudan temporarily made the MDGs irrelevant and reversed earlier progress towards them.

Finally, the MDGs had limited relevance to those indigenous groups who prioritize the preservation of their traditional way of life over

120 A mention of the 'Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States' (known as the Barbados Programme of Action) was inserted in the MDGs during the 2005 revision as Target 8C: address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States.

Figure 10. National Ownership of the MDG Agenda among Governments, by Country Income Level (70 countries covered by an ADR or case study)



economic and, perhaps to a lesser degree, social development. The MDG Report for indigenous peoples in Colombia, published in 2013 with support from UNDP and the MDG Achievement Fund,¹²¹ proposed five alternative goals it deemed more relevant to indigenous people: 1) territorial protection; 2) self-determination; 3) balanced way to a good life; 4) state reform; and 5) a consultative approach. Another example was found in Belize, where the Mayan communities in the Toledo district are considered among the poorest in the country and the recent MAF highlighted that the district had the lowest level of access to water and sanitation in the country. Yet it was reported that the toilets installed in some Maya communities by another UN agency were used for storage instead. The reason may be that latrines are simply irrelevant in this context: the communities in question live at very low population density and thus incur much lower risks of contagion through human faeces than exist in a densely populated area, and their slash-and-burn agriculture implies frequent displacements of abodes.

Finding 2. UNDP’s structure of regional bureaux and Country Offices helped enhance the relevance of UNDP support by adapting its offer of services and products to the diverse contexts in which it works. Each tool had its own domain of relevance. At times, the vigorous rollout by UNDP of a variety of tools led to some tools being tried in contexts where they had limited relevance.

Its large Country Office network was one of the reasons why UNDP was chosen as the ‘champion’ and ‘scorekeeper’ of the MDGs. This network indeed proved capable of rolling out new products and programmes to more than 130 countries, all the while adapting these products and programmes to national and local specifics. The bureaux for Africa and for Asia-Pacific rolled out regional MDG initiatives beginning in the 2003–2005 period.¹²² UNDP provided a flexible array of services that could be tailored to specific circumstances. This included the MDGs themselves, which UNDP helped adapt to a number of countries (see Section 4.2). The Asia-Pacific

121 UNDP, ‘La Otra Visión: Pueblos Indígenas y los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio’, 2013. The publication was funded by the MDG Achievement Fund.

122 Although UNDP MDG support varied across regions, with a greater investment in Africa and Asia and the Pacific than in other regions, its visibility was also more pronounced in countries that experienced or were experiencing high levels of human deprivation.

Figure 11. MDG Icons



MDG Initiative was highly relevant, including throughout the global financial crisis, which enhanced the initiative's responsiveness and shifted its emphasis from macroeconomic modelling to supporting UNDP Country Offices and United Nations Country Teams in the region.¹²³

Another UNDP asset brought to bear in support of the MDGs was its established position as the UN system coordinator at country level and through UNDG. UNDP coordination facilitated MDG monitoring, MAF implementation and the post-2015 consultations.

UNDP products and tools designed to fulfil these roles were coherent and mutually reinforcing. For instance, MDGR data intended to feed into the campaigning work. Subnational localization was logically coherent with the national MDG adaptation, and in fact only pushed that logic one step further. The MAF was sometimes preceded by an MDGR that highlighted a particular lagging goal or region. All these different roles were meant to converge and add up to a

strong pressure on governments, financiers and development actors to do more to help the poor.

Each tool had its own domain of relevance, as follows:

- MDG planning and costing were most relevant in countries with a strong planning culture and apparatus. Costing was most relevant in countries benefiting from large ODA.
- At the subnational level, MDG localization was more relevant in middle-income countries with lagging geographic pockets and in countries with a strong decentralization policy.
- Campaigning was most relevant in 'open societies', where the citizenry can exert actual pressure on their governments.
- Country-level MDGRs were comparably more relevant when they filled a gap in development monitoring, but less so when duplicating other reports (e.g. the almost annual national Human Development Reports in Mali apparently made MDGRs less appealing).

123 UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific (2008–2013)', Independent Evaluation Office, New York, 2013.

- UNDP support to data collection and analysis was relevant when little data existed, as well as in cases where data existed at the level of each line ministry but was not well centralized in a statistical office. In such contexts, NGOs, the United Nations and donors typically conduct a lot of surveys by themselves to compensate for the lack of data.
- The MAF is potentially relevant anywhere. Using the results-based management approach inherent to the MDGs, it can help any country identify lagging indicators and bottlenecks to the Goals achievement, and has already been used in MDG+ contexts (i.e. countries where MDG targets are more ambitious than the globally agreed ones). However, UNDP is not the only UN organization that has developed such a tool; UNICEF and the World Health Organization in particular developed similar diagnostic tools, notably on maternal health that has been a lagging MDG in many countries.¹²⁴ These other tools are sectoral in nature, while the comparative value of the MAF lies in its balancing of cross-sectoral and sectoral actions, both substantively and politically.

The relevance of UNDP work was also influenced by political factors that highlighted the central role of host governments. For example, Brazil's political environment was conducive to an early rollout of the MDGs. In Indonesia, explicit support to the MDGs started late (in 2010), following a presidential instruction commanding greater attention to the MDGs and a meeting in Bali chaired by Indonesia's vice president and attended by all cabinet members and governors, on how to accelerate MDG achievement. A focus on the MDGs provided the re-elected president a way to energize his pro-poor and job-creation agenda. In contrast, UNDP faced severe political constraints in contexts where the relevance of upstream MDG planning and policy support was limited by weak government ownership.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

This section reviews the UNDP MDG roles identified in Chapter 3 in terms of their usefulness to programme countries, with the exception of coordination, which is reviewed in Section 4.5 Partnerships and Strategic Positioning, because it does not lend itself to clear deliverable but rather supports other roles and actors. Subnational planning and local development projects are combined in the same section, as the evaluation found that the latter generally supported the former.

CAMPAIGNING FOR THE MDGS

Finding 3. Through its varied campaigning activities, i.e. the Millennium Campaign combined with Country Offices' own campaigning efforts and MDG country reports, UNDP has effectively ensured that the MDGs remained at the centre of the global, and in some cases national, development debate.

The Millennium Campaign and UNDP Country Offices utilized a variety of strategies, including: the Stand Up campaign; MDG ambassadors; media awards for MDG reporting; MDG awards for private sector entities; easy-to-understand icons; and policy dialogue with governments and civil society. In some countries (e.g. Albania), the campaign was so successful that the MDGs became synonymous with UNDP, which was not necessarily the aim. The Kenya Country Office organized an annual MDG award to private entities that have contributed to transforming the lives of people through their contributions to specific goals. In Ghana, outreach was conducted largely through partners and national ownership was evident. In Europe, the creation of the \$900 million MDG Achievement Fund was attributed in part to the Millennium Campaigns significant advocacy effort in Spain, as well as to the Gleneagles summit.

124 For instance, WHO, 'Road Map for Accelerating the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals Related to Maternal and Newborn Health in Africa', 2008.

In developing countries, while there is no strong counterfactual, the case of Belize shows that UNDP was at times critical to keeping the MDGs on the national agenda. The Belize sub-office is very small and depends administratively on the El Salvador Country Office. This being the case, it should come as no surprise that UNDP MDG support to Belize started as late as 2007, when the office managed to hire staff to manage this portfolio. The country case study conducted for this evaluation indicated that by 2007, many people had forgotten about the MDGs entirely. Other small island developing states and countries with a small UNDP sub-office might have been in a similar position of being unable to roll out all intended MDG-related products and services.

The evaluation tentatively concluded that without UNDP campaigning efforts (as understood by sum of its areas of work), the MDGs would have probably been forgotten in many countries, as quite a few international declarations and goals had been previously.

Whether UNDP campaigning created political interest where there was none or little to start with is another question. To be successful, these events needed to resonate with some strong local agenda. Moreover, it is unlikely that the Millennium Campaign could have worked in countries where the government radically opposed giving space and influence to civil society. The Millennium Campaign integrated the existence of a democratic space in its country selection criteria for this obvious reason.

Finding 4. The Millennium Campaign targeted a small number of countries. Its geographic coverage was therefore quite narrow and it failed to tap into the strong campaigning energy that existed in Latin America.

The evaluation did not discover much campaigning work in case study countries.¹²⁵ The overall impression was one of weak presence at the country level. MDG campaigning was geographically heterogeneous and lacked a systematic approach as compared, for example, to the geographic scope of the MDGRs. The Millennium Campaign set up regional office hubs to support country-level campaigning in parallel to the UNDP institutional structure. Evidence indicated that this architecture was used to share campaigning materials and strategies (e.g. in West Africa). However, there was a lack of systematic learning and documentation of good practices that could be shared among countries.

The fact that the Millennium Campaign was set up at a distance from the normal UNDP hierarchy may have limited its capacity to call upon UNDP Country Offices to roll out activities in a large number of countries. This finding echoes the 2009 evaluation of the Millennium Campaign, which concluded that the Millennium Campaign was effective in raising awareness of the MDGs in some European donor countries and among some of its target countries in the South, but that the selection of partners and countries had been opportunistic and personality-driven. The same evaluation recommended greater decentralization, “rebalancing their communication resources to focus more on the capacity of national campaigns rather than on the global office” and a stronger strategic approach to partner selection tightly linked to concrete policy objectives so as to “engage organizations, not individuals.”¹²⁶

Selection criteria for priority Millennium Campaign countries included the absence of conflict, combined with some democratic space and a significant number of poor people. This evaluation confirmed the appropriateness of the first two criteria. For obvious reasons, countries in conflict are much less likely to achieve the

125 Note, however, that because the concentration of campaigning activity was earlier (2002–2010), its coverage is more likely to have been forgotten by those interviewed for this evaluation.

126 Otero, Eva, et al. ‘UN Millennium Campaign: External Evaluation’, 2009.

MDGs or even to care about them,¹²⁷ and countries with limited space for open debate have no use for a *modus operandi* based on citizens holding their government to account.

In contrast, the criterion requiring a large number of poor people resulted in a campaign that focused on Africa and Asia and did not take advantage of the strong campaigning momentum that existed in Latin America. The Millennium Campaign decision not to focus on Latin America and the Caribbean was justified by the fact that the region needed less ODA than others. Indeed, a number of Latin American countries independently conducted vibrant MDG campaigns, proving they did not require Millennium Campaign support. However, from a South-South cooperation perspective the Millennium Campaign itself could have benefited from working in Latin America, in the sense that it could have tapped into the ideas and dynamism generated in the region, such as in Brazil, where the MDG icons now in global use were originally designed (see Figure 11). The example of MyWorld, rolled out by the Millennium Campaign in 2012 to 2013 to collect people's priorities for the post-2015 agenda, demonstrates that the Campaign is perfectly able to reach out to a large number of developing countries and that such a systematic outreach can be advantageous.

Finding 5. Among the Millennium Campaign initiatives to raise MDG awareness, the Stand Up campaign had a large outreach but lacked a clear link to policy outcomes.

The Stand Up campaign reached large numbers of people, allegedly involving 43 million people worldwide in 2007, 116 million people in 2008,¹²⁸ and 173 million people in 2009.¹²⁹ These large figures should of course be quoted with care since there is no practical way to verify them, but there is little doubt that Stand Up events were highly visible globally. However, the impact of this campaign on policy was dubious. The majority of interviewees by the 2009 external evaluation of the Millennium Campaign were critical about the objective of Stand Up, and raised questions about its effectiveness beyond short-lived and local media attention.¹³⁰ The Asia report of the same 2009 evaluation concluded that while these events have clearly been successful in rallying huge numbers of people, the level of MDG awareness in India and the Philippines remained fairly low and mainly restricted to government, academia and certain civil society circles. The Africa report of the same evaluation concluded that the impact of Stand Up and other awareness raising activities on the levels of citizens' MDG awareness in Africa was unclear, quoting a Kenyan partner as saying: "We stood up, so what?"¹³¹

Similarly in Japan, national civil society organizations actively participated in the second and third White Band Days, which appealed to a large segment of society. Despite this rapid spread of the campaign, or perhaps because of it, the core message on the need for policy reform was often forgotten.¹³²

127 UN ESCWA research on the development-conflict nexus suggest that a deteriorating security climate "tend to impact upon the two vehicles that increase the capacity to fund MDG attainments (the economic basket) and provide the goods and services that make the [MDG] targets attainable (the social welfare basket)." See United Nations, 'The Developmental Costs of Conflict in the ESCWA Region: A Composite MDG Index for Conflict-Affected Countries', ESCWA, undated.

128 United Nations General Assembly, 'Report of the Secretary General on the Work of the Organization', 2009.

129 United Nations, 'Record-breaking 173 Million People Take Stand with UN', 21 October 2009, un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32653.

130 Otero, Eva, et al. 'UN Millennium Campaign: External Evaluation', 2009.

131 Awori, Taaka, 'UN Millennium Campaign External Evaluation – Africa subreport', Leitmotiv Social Consultants, 2009.

132 In addition, the sale of white bands by partner NGOs inspired controversy when the public assumed that the proceeds would be channelled to community development activities. Instead, the proceeds were meant to fund further campaigning. See: Watanabe, Y., et al., *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, 2008, p. 274.

The 2009 external evaluation of the Millennium Campaign stressed the importance of linking awareness-raising activities to a deeper, ongoing process of citizen engagement with government on specific MDG-related issues. Noting that governments are often indifferent to civil society ‘making noise’, the evaluation also recommended that the Millennium Campaign better leverage its UN identity to facilitate access to national-level policy debate.

UNDP outreach to national media was limited. Most such engagement with the media was event-driven and usually centred on the Stand Up campaign or White Band Days. The creation of MDG-specific journalism awards represents one of the few exceptions to this finding.¹³³

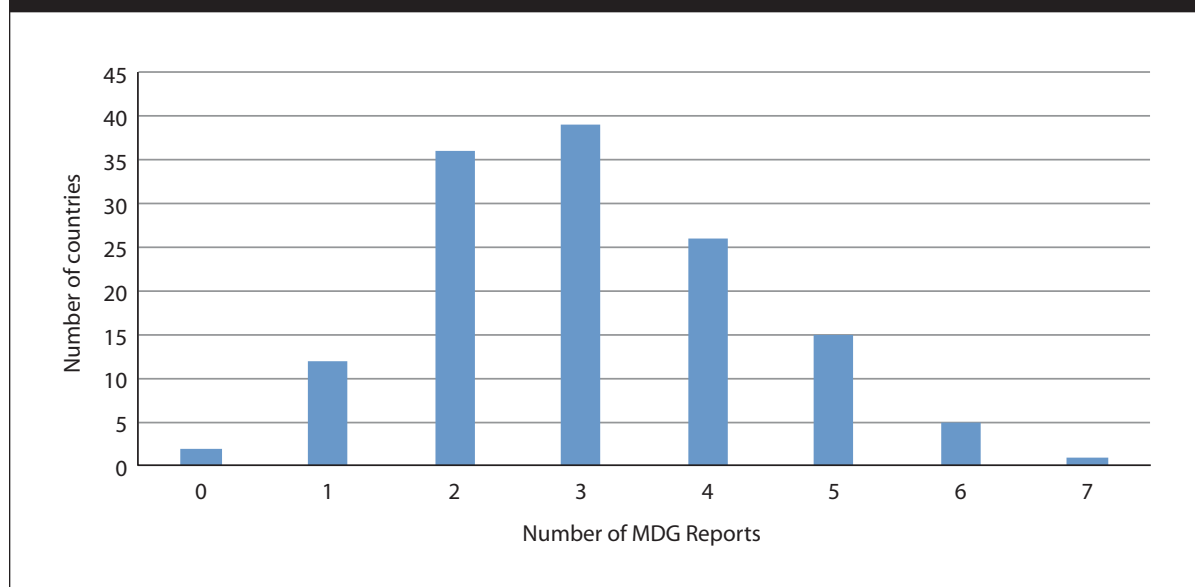
SCOREKEEPING

Finding 6. MDG reporting at the country level, constantly supported by UNDP over the evaluated period, has been an operational success in that a large number of reports were

produced worldwide. The involvement of other UN agencies in the preparation of national MDGRs was useful to peer review the reports, though this involvement was found lower than recommended by relevant guidelines.

Country-level MDG reporting has been an operational success. It is one of the most active areas of UNDP work, accounting for an estimated 30 percent of all MDG expenditures at the country level. Based on the repository of country MDGRs,¹³⁴ approximately 450 country reports were produced from 2001 to 2014 in 134 countries. There was a wide variability in the total number of published MDGRs per country, some issuing a report almost every year (e.g. Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia), while most countries issued only two or three reports, the majority of these in the lead-up to the 2005 and 2010 UN summits. Some countries also produced many subnational MDGRs (e.g. 35 subnational reports were produced in sub-Saharan Africa).

Figure 12. Most Countries Produced Two or Three MDG Reports



133 For example, UNDP partnered with the Ghana Journalist Association to establish an award for journalist coverage of MDG issues.

134 MDGRs are available via two websites, one managed by UNDP (undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/mdg-reports) and the other by UNDG (undg.org/index.cfm?P=87&cf=A). Neither offers an exhaustive list, however.

MDGRs show increasing levels of national ownership and quality over time. Also notable was the growing role of national governments in report publication, in line with relevant guidelines.¹³⁵ This contrasts with the “wide variations in country ownership and authorship of the MDGRs” observed in 2003.¹³⁶

Cooperation with UN agencies was, however, limited in many cases to only a round of comments late in the report preparation process.¹³⁷ This level of involvement of specialized UN agencies was useful to peer-review the reports, but appears lower than recommended in the relevant guidelines¹³⁸ and represents an area for improvement.

The capacity to mobilize UN agencies is among the reasons why UNDP was assigned the role of scorekeeper at the country level. UNDP needs to balance government ownership of MDGRs and development data with an inclusive approach that enhances the credibility and wide acceptance of the reports. While UN agency involvement in the MDG reporting process does not necessarily ensure data quality, it provides a useful peer-review mechanism to this end.

Report quality has improved over time, as evidenced by the country case studies conducted for this evaluation. Initially, the MDGR format was that of a scorecard, but the reports gradually became more analytic and lengthy. This evolution may at times have even exceeded what should be required of a national MDGR. For example, in Bangladesh, reports are highly detailed and have

been issued over the past seven years on an almost annual basis, which is more often than new data is made available through new national social surveys, typically conducted every four to five years.

The goals of MDG monitoring were to: 1) monitor achievement; 2) enhance the Goals’ visibility and generate greater political interest for them at country level; and 3) hold governments, UN agencies and donors accountable for progress achieved against intentions. The first two outcomes were generally achieved in the countries visited as part of this evaluation. The third objective remained problematic, in that two of the very groups that the reporting process should hold accountable—UN agencies and governments—are in fact authoring the reports.

Beyond the expected outcomes, MDGR-related work yielded additional positive outcomes by improving the data collection, monitoring and analysis systems, as well as increasing demand for data at the national level. Launched through press conferences and often reported in the media, MDGRs also contributed to MDG awareness-raising. Some of the recent MDGRs also delivered diagnostic value that informed the identification of lagging MDGs for MAF rollout (e.g. Ghana, Kenya).¹³⁹

Finding 7. Country-level MDG reports and national Human Development Reports had distinct but complementary roles. In practice though, the two often competed for the attention of the same authors and audiences.

135 MDGRs are to be prepared by national governments, with UNDP supporting the process, including mobilizing the UN system.

136 UNDP, ‘Millennium Development Goals Reports (MDGRs): An Assessment, Volume I’, Evaluation Office, New York, 2003.

137 This observation was validated by this evaluation’s country case studies. However, there were cases where UN agencies actively supported the government, including by creating task support teams or in drafting MDGR chapters focused on specific goals (e.g. Lao PDR, Uganda).

138 According to a 2003 MDGR Guidance Note: “Ideally, MDGRs are prepared by the Government with active participation from CSOs and supported by the UN Country Team...The Heads of Agency of UNDG have reaffirmed the need to seek the involvement of all agencies represented at the country level, including UN regional commissions and the World Bank, with a view to ensuring as wide a support as possible for the MDGs.”

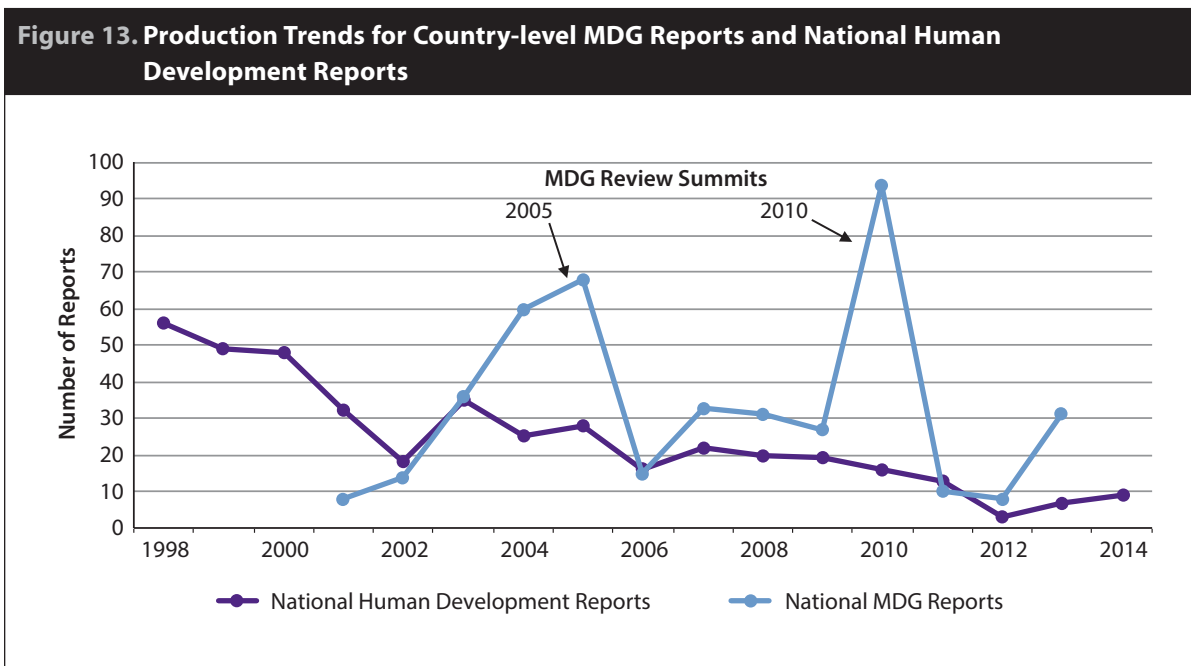
139 In Kenya, the MDGRs and wide stakeholder consultations were used to come up with the MAF to address lagging MDGs (i.e. maternal and neonatal health) and informed national policies (e.g. the First Lady’s Beyond Zero Campaign and free maternal health services).

The number of national Human Development Report produced each year has decreased since 2000, while country-level MDGR production peaked leading up to the 2005 and 2010 UN summits (see Figure 13). The peaks are due in large part to increased funding for MDGRs made available to UNDP Country Offices ahead of the two summits.

The decline in numbers of national Human Development Reports (NHDRs) may be linked with the rise in MDGRs, although that may not be the only reason.¹⁴⁰ The roles of MDGRs and national Human Development Reports are in theory quite distinct. The latter are often intended as advocacy vehicles and are commissioned by UNDP, with independent status and varying thematic focus. In contrast, MDGRs are standardized national monitoring reports owned by national governments. In practice, the distinction between the roles of the two types of reports is not always clear. MDGRs and national Human Development Reports provide an evidence base

for MDG-oriented development planning, with a specific focus on multidimensional poverty.¹⁴¹ MDGRs have been used to highlight geographic areas with lagging development based on MDG data disaggregated at the local level, a function that the national and subnational Human Development Reports have been fulfilling since the early 1990s. Most importantly, MDGRs are usually produced by the same UNDP staff and government counterparts tasked with publishing national Human Development Reports, making it difficult if not impossible to publish the two reports concomitantly.

Another consideration is that, while dedicated funding was made available to UNDP Country Offices ahead of the 2005 and 2010 summits so they could prepare MDG reports, NHDRs must be financed from the Country Offices' own resources. This feature could have made the MDGR a more attractive alternative for Country Offices than National Human Development Reports. National Human Development Reports



Source: UNDP website (data not exhaustive).

140 The decline started around 1999 to 2000, slightly before the first MDGs reports, and was also linked to a realization that many national Human Development Reports were of poor quality.

141 UNDP, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Poverty Reduction', Independent Evaluation Office, New York, 2013.

still fared well in some countries, such as in Mali, whose *Observatoire du Développement Humain* produced them on a near-annual basis, a feature that apparently ‘crowded the space’ for MDGRs. In other countries, the two reports have coexisted and fulfilled complementary roles (e.g. Bosnia, Egypt, Indonesia, Sudan).

Finding 8. Though more modest than at the country level, UNDP contribution to MDG reporting at the regional and global levels was both appropriate and useful.

At the regional and global levels, UNDP played a facilitating role in MDG monitoring. The UN Economic Commission for Africa and UNDP shared the workload near evenly. Strong partnerships with UN regional commissions produced results at the economic and political levels in Asia and the Pacific. In some cases, subregional MDGRs served as vehicles for wider advocacy and policy dialogue. For instance, the Pacific regional MDG report influenced regional policymaking and contributed to the integration of the MDGs into the Pacific Development Plan, facilitated by UNDP in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.¹⁴²

At the global level, UNDP had a discreet but acknowledged role. UN-DESA coordinated the production of global reports with UN technical agencies, which are mandated by their membership to collect certain statistics and maintain databases on their areas of interest. As such, specialized agencies are ‘data custodians’ who curate specific data sets and author specific chapters in their area of expertise. Because UNDP doesn’t own such statistical data, it was not entrusted to write chapters of the global reports. However, the organization contributed to the overall design and choice

of topics and participated in many subgroups (e.g. gender, poverty or environment). UNDP’s support is also sought after for launching events and dissemination as well as for international conferences devoted to MDG reporting.¹⁴³

Finally, UNDP participated in preparing the MDG Gap Task Force Reports that monitored Goal 8 at the global level, helping to keep global commitments on the agenda and framing post-2015 agenda discussions at the 2010 MDG Summit.¹⁴⁴

Finding 9. UNDP MDG monitoring work and statistical capacity-building support led to improvements in the quality of MDG data and contributed to a more data-friendly environment. However, development data remains rare, scattered, costly to collect and politically sensitive. Much remains to be done, especially if the SDG targets are to be monitored transparently after 2015.

UNDP MDG monitoring work led to improvements in the quality of MDG data, which involved: 1) identifying data gaps; 2) contributing to surveys; 3) building central statistical office capacity; 4) installing databases to host MDG-related data (often DevInfo¹⁴⁵); and 5) connecting government data producers and users. While the latter may seem trivial, it was particularly useful in countries where the government lacked a strong planning or economic development ministry able to coordinate line ministries and access their administrative data.¹⁴⁶ Governments needed a cross-sectoral overview of development to allocate resources to varied sectors, and MDGRs occasionally provided such an overview by reaching out to line ministries in order to access and publish underused administrative data (e.g. in Belize; the issue also surfaced in Bangladesh).

142 Soni-Bhagat, Shalini, and Rajeev Pillay, ‘Independent Outcome Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Cooperation Framework for the Asia-Pacific Region: Poverty Cluster’, Abacus International Management L.L.C., 2006.

143 For example, two global conferences on MDG statistics were held on 1–3 October 2007 and 19–21 October 2011 in Manila, led by the UN-DESA Statistic Division with UNDP participation and support.

144 UNDP, ‘Evaluation of the Fourth Global Programme’, Independent Evaluation Office, New York, 2013.

145 For national DevInfo adaptations, see: devinfo.org/libraries.aspx/Catalog.aspx.

146 Data maintained by line ministries about their costs and outputs, e.g. number of schools or teachers.

The impact of the MDGs on development data availability has been documented. A recent analysis of a subset of 22 MDG indicators showed that the number of developing countries that had two or more data points for at least 16 of those indicators rose from four in 2003 to 129 in 2013. Barely half of developing countries had at least one data point available to measure skilled attendance at birth accurately from 1990 to 1994, whereas 90 percent of these countries had this type of data available by 2005 to 2009.¹⁴⁷ UNDP was by far not the only agency contributing to this improvement; much of this work is done by other UN agencies and the World Bank.

Recent improvements notwithstanding, there is some naïveté in the ‘big data’ discourse, as if we were living in an era where all information had magically become free of cost, impartial and truthful—whereas nothing could be further from reality. While the context is now more data-friendly than it was at the onset of the millennium, much remains to be done. The availability, frequency and quality of poverty monitoring data have remained low in least developed countries, small states, and countries and territories in fragile situations. According to the 2014 UN-DESA Population and Vital Statistics Report, while 67 percent of all countries and territories worldwide maintain a civil registry deemed to be more than 90 percent complete, this proportion drops to 20 percent among sub-Saharan African nations.¹⁴⁸ More than half of the babies born in sub-Saharan Africa (about 15 million per year) are not registered at birth. Many adults, for example among indigenous peoples in Peru, are unable to vote for the same reason.¹⁴⁹ In 2012, routine health information systems detected only 14 percent of the world’s malaria cases.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, just because there is more data than before does not mean it is necessarily good, reliable data. Data gaps and quality issues, poor compliance

with methodological standards and lack of disaggregated data were among the major challenges for MDG monitoring. Data quality control takes a level of expertise, and that function is increasingly becoming critical in a world of ubiquitous data.¹⁵¹ This constraint is likely to affect the monitoring of the SDGs, which will be much more complex than MDG monitoring.

Finding 10. There is a disconnect between MDG monitoring at the global and country levels. Country-level monitoring, led by UNDP, is based on the localized MDGs adopted by each country. In contrast, global monitoring, led by UN-DESA, is based on the global list of MDG targets and indicators. The data can also differ. UNDP could have tried to bridge this gap between global- and country-level monitoring, but it lacked the mandate, culture and capacity in statistical data management necessary to do so, or to more usefully contribute to global monitoring processes.

It is important to stress that the two levels (global and national) fulfil different purposes and do not respond to the same logic. In many countries, the MDGs were adapted and adjusted to better suit the national context, and the role of the national MDGRs is to remind the government of its pledges. Country-level monitoring is therefore based on the MDGs as adopted by a country’s planning apparatus and legislation. National MDGRs helped countries orient their own planning processes towards their own national versions of the MDGs, guided by their own data in that regard. Global monitoring sought to answer the question of whether the MDGs were being achieved at the global level and was thus based on the standard, global list of MDG targets and indicators. The data can also differ, even for the same indicators, because national MDGRs and databases are based on national data, while the

147 United Nations, ‘MDG 2014 Report’, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, UN-DESA, 2014.

148 United Nations, ‘Population and Vital Statistics Report’, UN-DESA, Statistical Papers Series A Vol. LXVI, 2014.

149 UNDP, ‘Report of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor’, 2008.

150 United Nations, ‘MDG 2014 Report’, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, UN-DESA, 2014.

151 See the rise of ‘fact checkers’ in the media and politics.

global monitoring system is based on national data as reviewed and adjusted by the mandated specialized UN agency in order to assure quality and ensure comparability across countries. The two levels of monitoring were entirely parallel and not linked with one another.

Even though monitoring at the national level was generally a success, national reports could have been better documented and utilized at the global level. The evaluation team found that neither UNDP nor UNDG online document repositories were up-to-date.¹⁵² Moreover, data from national reports was never compiled into a central database. It is unclear if this was the objective of MDG Monitor,¹⁵³ created in 2007 by UNDP in partnership with UN-DESA, ReliefWeb and UNICEF, with the intent of becoming a one-stop-shop for information on progress towards the MDGs globally and at the country level. The website and its data were never updated after the initial launch. Plans were made and maquettes developed to enhance the site with a localization-friendly, geo-referenced visualization. These plans were not approved, and the site was left quietly inactive. The envisaged data visualization tools would have placed a very high burden on UNDP headquarters, as consistently maintaining the site and the data flow throughout the years necessitated a long-term investment of staff resources that management was not willing to commit to at the time. As explained, UNDP did not even carry through with its initial investment in the Monitor, perhaps because the website duplicated the UN-DESA Millennium Development Goals Indicators website,¹⁵⁴ proudly subtitled ‘the *official* United Nations site for the MDG Indicators’ (emphasis added). Indeed, UN-DESA led MDG monitoring at the global level, as already explained; it also had the technical (statistical) mandate and capacity to fulfil it as well

as access to the data through its long-term collaboration with statistical divisions in all UN specialized agencies.¹⁵⁵

UNDP could have tried to bridge the gap between global and country-level monitoring, and this was perhaps the niche of the MDG Monitor, but UNDP lacked the necessary mandate, culture, history and staff proficient in statistical data management to make such a contribution. Outside of the Human Development Report Office, UNDP never developed a strong central repository of development data. Unlike specialized UN agencies, UNDP is not mandated to do so. The scorekeeper mandate was driven by the UNDP comparative advantages at country-level (i.e. coordination role, proximity to government, and Country Office network), which did not include data proficiency or custodianship. These comparative advantages do not apply at the global level, where data integrity, credibility and comparability are of much greater importance.

MDG-BASED NATIONAL PLANNING

In the theory of change elaborated at the onset of this evaluation, the planning pathway (the integration of the MDGs in national development plans, policies, strategies, programmes and budgets) was considered central to achieving country-level impact. The MDG-based national planning approach aimed to use national development strategies as a vector to translate the global MDG targets into national action through a country-owned and cross-cutting agenda. PRSPs were identified as “the primary strategic and implementation vehicle” to translate the MDGs into national medium-term goals, strategies, resource requirements and policies.¹⁵⁶ At the time when the MDG were established, PRSPs

152 During the course of this evaluation, IEO discovered MDGRs in several country case studies that were not available on the two MDGR websites (e.g. in Ethiopia and Ghana).

153 See mdgmonitor.org.

154 See unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx.

155 The World Bank website also provides a useful visualization tool through its World Development Indicator database feeding into its Global Monitoring Report.

156 UNDG, ‘Guidance Note: UN Country Team Engagement in PRSPs’, December 2003.

were expanding and UNDP was increasingly called upon by developing countries governments to help prepare them. This leveraged a position of trust with developing country governments to advocate for the integration of the MDGs into their national and sometimes subnational development goals and priorities.

The present section examines the degree to which UNDP was successful in instilling MDG national goals and targets in the plans and budgets of developing countries. Doing so requires a serious and open consideration of the risk of tokenism. Without additional funding or a serious implementation effort to translate intent into reality within current resource constraints, some MDG-aligned development strategies may end up as mere statements of intent.

UNDP identified the planning pathway very early (not surprisingly since development planning is in the DNA of the organization), but most of this work was undertaken after the 2005 World Summit. In recognition of the slow national government progress in aligning national strategies with the MDGs, leaders at the summit resolved to adopt and implement comprehensive national development strategies for MDG achievement. Accordingly, the emphasis of UNDP support shifted away from research, monitoring and campaigning towards increasing technical assistance to MDG-based planning, which dominated the UNDP portfolio after 2005.

In Africa, this was often premised by an MDG costing exercise piloted by the Millennium Project. Based on such calculations, the Millennium Project final report, 'Investing in Development',¹⁵⁷ concluded that the MDGs were achievable but required targeted technical support and investment in many countries,

especially the poorest. The report presented the results of Millennium Project research on the methods developing countries and their partners could use to rollout MDG-aligned plans and programmes on a large scale, and on the resources needed to achieve the Goals.

Finding 11. The Millennium Project MDG costing and macroeconomic analysis, together with the work of the World Bank, helped make the case for a significant ODA increase in countries that can absorb it. In doing so, the Millennium Project effectively supported the wider UNDP effort to advocate for enhanced ODA support of the MDGs. However, once the exercise was completed, most countries no longer used the costing methodology.

The Millennium Project costing methodology, called 'bottom-up costing', calculates the overall investment and operating costs necessary to achieve the MDGs. These exercises were often expensive and time-consuming and there was no evidence that the costing methodology used in countries (including Albania, Ethiopia and Ghana) was used again in national planning processes. The costing approach typically led to higher figures than available ODA, but not unrealistically so. For instance, in Ethiopia, the 2005 costing exercise estimated the cost of achieving the MDGs by 2015 at a total investment of \$101 billion, with \$25 billion to be supported by the private sector and communities, \$52 billion to be sourced from domestic revenue and \$24 billion in foreign aid and borrowed funds.¹⁵⁸ At the time, total ODA to Ethiopia was \$1.9 billion per annum.¹⁵⁹

These estimates were challenged on several grounds. One was that a large influx of ODA could cause inflation and other macroeconomic

157 United Nations, 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals', Millennium Project, 2005.

158 OECD/DAC reports a total ODA amount of \$28.8 billion during 2002–2012 for Ethiopia, which would imply that the plan was well-funded by ODA (achievement of MDG 8), in part through debt relief.

159 Government of Ethiopia, 'Ethiopia: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Needs Assessment Synthesis Report', Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, December 2005.

disruptions in a particular country (the so-called ‘Dutch disease’). This occurred in a context of debate related to Goal 8, aid effectiveness¹⁶⁰ and the absorption capacity of aid, a debate involving mainly the World Bank, the IMF, UNDP and the Millennium Project.

Interviewed Millennium Project staff felt that the preparatory and follow-up work by BDP and the Regional Bureau for Africa on the Gleneagles scenarios¹⁶¹ convinced the World Bank and donors in general of the absorption capacity of social sectors in particular, helping to dispel fears of macroeconomic destabilization as a consequence of large ODA increases. Of course, reality is slightly more complex. The World Bank did not just rely on Millennium Project calculations but contributed—with UNDP, UN-DESA and other partners—to the development a Computable General Equilibrium model called MAquette for MDG Simulations (MAMS) in more than 50 countries.¹⁶² The two costing approaches were both used in Ethiopia in 2005 and produced cost estimates of a comparable order of magnitude: MAMS yielded a total estimate of \$65 billion¹⁶³ compared to the bottom-up methodology estimate of \$101 billion.

This was an unusual area for UNDP to work in—helping to recapture some of the policy space it previously lost to the World Bank and IMF. In this respect, reaching out to Professor Jeffrey Sachs to lead the Millennium Project and entrusting him with the responsibility of this research paid off, helping to build UNDP

credentials and increase the credibility of UNDP MDG-related policy work.

In January 2007, Millennium Project advisory work was folded into the MDG Support Cluster within the UNDP BDP Poverty Group. This cluster was created to, *inter alia*, assist developing countries in preparing and implementing MDG-based national development strategies. BDP took over Millennium Project tools and methodology without modifying the approach until the 2010 MDG Summit.

Finding 12. The evaluation estimated that 80 percent of UNDP programme countries have adopted a subset or the totality of the MDGs in one of their development plans or another. The MDGs have been used in national development policies and plans in different ways: as general, consensual objectives; as planned and monitored targets; or purely as a quote or reference. Referential use of the MDGs in plans and strategies, while frequent initially, tended to give way over time to more programmatic use of MDG targets as planning and monitoring devices. However, not all MDGs were equally included in national development strategies. Gender equality targets beyond primary education were the least used.

A study commissioned by this evaluation focused on how the national development strategies of 50 countries were aligned with MDG targets. It found that about 80 percent of sampled countries have adopted the MDGs in one of their development plans (see Figure 14). PRSPs in

160 It is important to note contextually the passing of the Paris Declaration in 2005 at the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which recognized that aid should be producing better impacts and articulated efforts centred around five pillars: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.

161 Scenarios based on the ODA Commitment for Africa agreed at the Gleneagles G8 summit held on 6–8 July 2005. In technical meetings preparing for the G8, agreement was reached to write off the entire \$40 billion debt owed by 18 African Highly Indebted Poor Countries to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Fund, with more countries eligible for debt relief if they met certain targets and conditions. The commitments are monitored at iif.un.org/content/gleneagles-oda-commitment-africa.

162 MAMS was developed as a tool for economy-wide country-level analysis of medium- and long-term development policies, including strategies for reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.

163 Lofgren, Hans, and Carolina Diaz-Bonilla. ‘An Ethiopian Strategy for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Simulations with the MAMS model’. Mimeo. World Bank, Washington D.C. 2005.

particular contained multiple references to the MDGs, and while their monitoring framework is typically broader than just the MDGs,¹⁶⁴ MDG indicators and targets were widely used. In what is perhaps a typical example, in the monitoring and evaluation framework of the Bangladesh Sixth Five Year Plan (2011–2015), 12 of the 35 indicators were MDG indicators.¹⁶⁵ This being said, many MDG targets and indicators were in use before the MDGs were articulated (e.g. the primary education for all targets originating in the 1990 World Summit for Children).

UNDP played a facilitative role in supporting national planning, but the determining factor was in all cases the concerned government's pre-existing social development and anti-poverty priorities and how well these resonated with the MDGs. Among case study countries, Indonesia and Ethiopia offered obvious examples of how the MDGs can resonate with a national political agenda. In this respect, the willingness and capacity of national partners to carry the MDG agenda was among the key explanatory factors of planning outcomes.

Various forms of MDGs use in national development planning have been identified, including to:

- Communicate a consensual objective (to rally various stakeholders around the same goals, raise awareness or mobilize attention to a neglected priority);
- Monitor benchmarks (measuring progress across time and nations);
- Plan targets (orienting implementation, service delivery and funding); and
- As referential/tokenistic language (without pragmatic implications).

Referential use, while initially frequent, tended to give way over time to more programmatic integration of MDG targets as planning and monitoring devices. This evaluation estimated that 64 percent of UNDP programme countries achieved this greater level of programmatic mainstreaming.

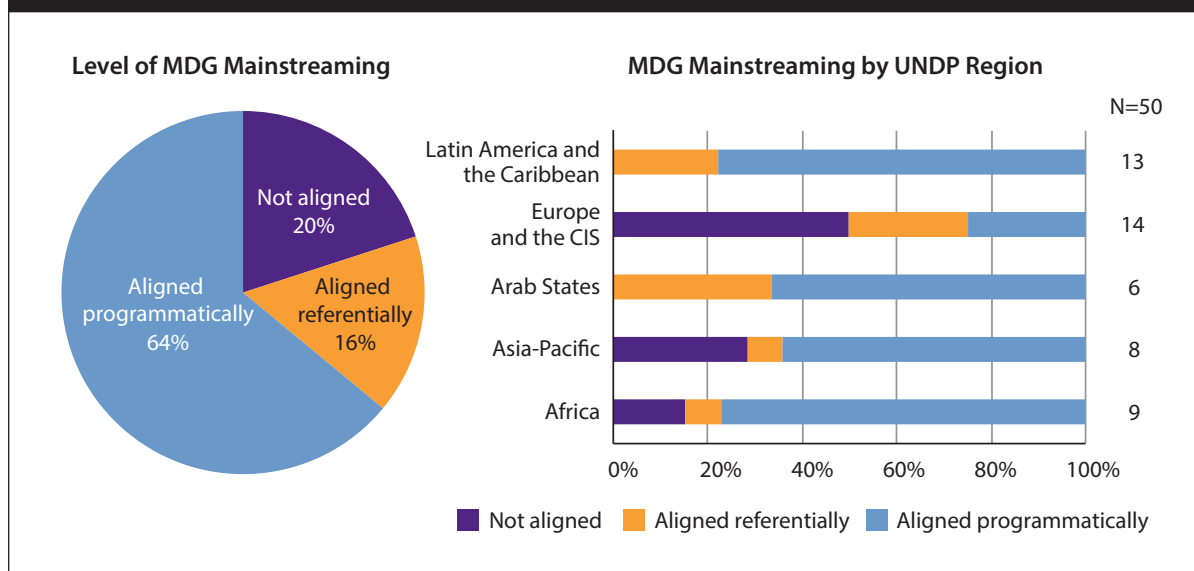
In 20 percent of countries covered by the study of national strategies, MDGs were not part of national development strategies. The actual share of UNDP programme countries that have not integrated the MDGs into national strategies may be lower because of the conscious attempt to include non-mainstreaming countries in the sample of national development strategies. In the equally purposeful sample of country case studies, all except one (Belize) instilled MDG targets and indicators into national plans, with UNDP assistance and varying degrees of integration. Among countries covered by UNDP Assessments of Development Results since 2003, approximately one-third—including a number of middle-income countries such as China, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Guyana, Libya, Moldova, Thailand and Turkey—demonstrated limited interest in integrating the MDGs into development planning.

Within UNDP, there was some reluctance to use the MDGs in national planning documents without first localizing the targets. The favoured approach was always to start with a purposeful review by national stakeholders of the MDG targets to tailor or customize them to the specificities of each country. Many countries reviewed the MDGs, their targets and indicators through workshops and studies with a view to adapting them to national realities, often with UNDP assistance. A review of the countries that have tailored the MDGs to their local contexts indicates that they have used one or several of the following six strategies:

164 With indicators on education, health, nutrition, family planning, water supply, credit for the poor, employment, public safety, rural development and infrastructure.

165 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 'Sixth Five Year Plan FY 2011-FY2015, Accelerating Growth and Reducing Poverty, Part 1, Strategic Directions and Policy Framework', Ministry of Planning, Planning Commission and International Monetary Fund, July 2011.

Figure 14. MDG Mainstreaming in National Strategies of 50 Developing Countries



- Adjusting numerical targets** of the Goals. Although difficult to measure precisely,¹⁶⁶ such adjustments appeared infrequently among the least developed countries, but very frequently in middle- and higher-income countries, which tended to raise the bar when adopting the MDGs (for example, to reflect national poverty rates);
- Adding new targets** to existing goals, another frequent behaviour in middle-income countries;
- Adjusting the target date**, such as the extension to 2020 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a rare occurrence overall;
- Including additional goals** to reflect a particular development challenge within the national context. For example, Afghanistan adopted security as Goal 9, while Cambodia added demining and mine victim assistance to its MDG agenda. Governance was added as a goal in some countries in democratic transition from autocratic rule (e.g. Albania, Iraq and Mongolia);
- Revising indicators** used to track progress, a very frequent occurrence reflecting countries' varied levels of statistical capacity; and
- Disaggregating goals through subnational planning.** Because this MDG adaptation strategy poses specific challenges, it is analysed further in the next section devoted to subnational planning.

Albania is among the best examples of a country that actively and continuously revised its targets to both reflect changing realities and make the targets themselves more ambitious.¹⁶⁷ The country's main strategic goal is to join the EU. Consequently, Albania revised most of its goals and added targets and indicators to track the achievement of standards that help its accession candidacy. When the country reached the education goal, it revised Goal 2 to incorporate education quality and added targets to monitor it, with a view to reaching OECD standards while increasing public spending on basic education to the level of new European Union members. Similarly, Armenia, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan modified Goal 2 to include eight or nine years

166 Because some of the reviewed countries do not list the values of their indicators in the baseline year (1990), it is not always recognizable whether they are overreaching the targets or reaching for less ambitious ones.

167 Albania is thus an 'MDG Plus' country.

of education for all children. Colombia and Mongolia augmented Goal 6 to include locally prevalent infectious diseases. Mali focused its poverty goal on food security and rural development, supporting it with new indicators that measure increases in cereal production, livestock and fish catches.

This evaluation did not identify countries that overtly rejected one or more goals, likely because the Millennium Declaration was signed by so many Heads of State. In practice however, not all MDGs were equally picked up by national development strategies. A 2008 study of 22 PRSPs found that almost all asserted a high degree of commitment to the MDG framework, while being selective in the targets and indicators adopted as priorities (e.g. by paying a lot of attention to social sector spending but comparatively little attention to hunger and nutrition, gender, decent work or technology transfer).¹⁶⁸ Among 19 countries¹⁶⁹ identified by the national development strategy study as having integrated the MDGs into their national plans in a contextually meaningful way, only eight adopted targets for

the gender equality goal beyond education (see Table 8).

This evaluation's study of national development strategies attempted to analyse public social sector expenditures in the same 50 countries as a way to gauge whether MDG mainstreaming is a valid pathway to increasing social service delivery. This analysis was particularly challenging due to the lack of consistent data across countries and over time. The data used was from the World Bank website and emanates from UNESCO (for education) and WHO (for health). No correlation was found between the degree to which countries used the MDGs in their national planning (either as programmatic tools or as a reference), and the likelihood of increasing or decreasing social expenditures. However, this analysis suffered from serious limitations such as the varied time-frames for the strategies selected in each country, and it missed a series of country-specific funding channels, such as the resources spent through local (decentralized) governments, safety nets and conditional cash transfer programmes.

Table 8. MDG Targets and Adaptation Strategies in 19 Countries

Types of MDG targets	Number (percent) of national development strategies adopting the targets
Water and sanitation	19 (100%)
Child health	19 (100%)
Maternal health	18 (95%)
Poverty	17 (90%)
Primary schooling	17 (90%)
Hunger	16 (84%)
HIV/AIDS and other diseases	16 (84%)
Gender equality in education	13 (68%)
Reproductive health	13 (68%)
Environment	9 (47%)
Gender equality beyond education	8 (42%)

168 Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, 'Are the MDGs Priority in Development Strategies and Aid Programmes? Only Few Are!' IPC-IG Working Paper 48, UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Brasilia, 2008.

169 Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Sudan, Tajikistan and Vietnam.

Therefore, the national development strategy study is not considered conclusive on this issue.

Finding 13. UNDP-supported MDG-based planning led to some implementation in approximately half of the supported countries. This success rate, below the 75 percent target set in UNDP project documentation, underscored the impact of intervening factors such as crisis and competing political agendas.

Some countries adopted the MDGs and later dropped them from their policy agenda due to competing agendas or issues requiring attention (e.g. Albania's process towards European Union accession circa 2005, Madagascar political crisis

circa 2008 and Mali's 2012 conflict), or simply due to changes in government economic policy. A detailed meta-analysis of 70 UNDP country programmes covered by a recent Assessment of Development Results or by one of the 11 country case studies conducted as part of this evaluation indicated that UNDP supported MDG integration into the development strategies of 42 countries (60 percent). Such support led to some implementation at national and subnational levels in 22 countries, approximately half of the countries that received UNDP support (see Tables 9 and 10). This is lower than the target set in the relevant UNDP project document, which envisaged that "three-fourths of the support provided has been operationalized."¹⁷⁰

Table 9. Success and Failures in MDG Planning	
Success: UNDP support to MDG planning leads to some level of implementation	22 countries (31% of 70)
... mainly at national level	16
... mainly at subnational level	4
... at both national and subnational levels	2
Failure: UNDP support to MDG planning leads to no or almost no implementation	20 countries (29%)
... because the process was interrupted by a crisis or a special situation	10
... for a reason other than crisis	10
No Try: No or very little UNDP support to MDG planning (generally due to a lack of interest from government)	20 countries (29%)
... with some impact on data availability and capacity	7
... with no discernible impact	13
Unclear cases:	8 countries (11%)
Total cases: (11 country case studies plus 65 countries covered by ADRs, minus overlaps)	70 countries (100%)

Note: Conclusions were based on the information on resource allocation and implementation included in UNDP Assessments of Development Results, some of which were clearer than others on this topic.

Table 10. MDG Planning Support in UNDP Programme Countries*		
Area of support	Number of countries (out of 70)**	Percent
MDG-aligned national planning	42	60%
MDG-aligned subnational planning	28	40%
Statistical support (beyond preparation of MDGRs)	33	47%

* Out of 70 UNDP programme countries covered by an ADR or country case study

** Double counts countries where multiple forms of MDG planning support were provided

170 UNDP, 'The MDG Support Project for MDG-Based National Development Strategies', Bureau for Development Policy, October 2006.

UNDP also supported a subnational MDG-aligned planning process in at least 28 of 70 sampled countries, suggesting that UNDP supported such processes in approximately 40 percent of its programme countries. However, such support led to clear follow-up and implementation of the final subnational plans in only six (or approximately one in five) of these 28 countries.

Finding 14. Other than facilitating MDG alignment of a large number of PRSPs (linked to significant debt relief and funding opportunities), UNDP contribution to mobilizing ODA resources for MDG achievement at the country level was found weak, notably at the subnational level.

The MDG Gap Task Force co-chaired by UN-DESA and UNDP produced annual reports tracking progress under Goal 8 but did not attempt to link such progress to other MDG goals or targets. The 2014 report found that many Goal 8 targets were close to being achieved. Duty-free and quota-free access to developed country markets was extended for exports from the 49 least developed countries, but agricultural subsidies in OECD countries remain entrenched. Debt relief for the world's poorest countries has increased, but small states continue to face long-standing debt sustainability challenges.¹⁷¹

Other than through facilitating MDG mainstreaming into a large number of PRSPs (linked to significant debt relief and funding opportunities), UNDP contribution to mobilizing ODA

resources for country-level MDG achievement was often found to be insufficient.

In Mali, UNDP has supported the planning apparatus for decades and leads the Round Table process.¹⁷² As such, the agency is central to donor coordination in the country. Yet, its contribution to the alignment of aid flows to support national development priorities through the Round Table mechanism was insufficient. Importantly, the historic *rapprochement* between UNDP and the World Bank—central to Kofi Annan's vision of a renewed global push for development—seemed to never have happened in Bamako. The evaluation made the same worrisome observation in Madagascar, another Round Table country.

In contrast, an unusually high level of programmatic convergence and coordination was observed among UNDP, the World Bank and members of the wider donor community in Ethiopia.¹⁷³ During the period under review, Ethiopia made huge strides towards MDG achievement through a strong push for decentralization from 2001 onward and a massive expansion of basic social services. This effort involved 38,000 health workers trained and deployed in or near communities, the construction of new schools and clinics and the training of additional teachers, in large part funded by ODA.¹⁷⁴ This massive expansion of social services was primarily the result of a strong government commitment to the fight against poverty, and donors would probably have supported it whether or not UNDP and the World

171 United Nations, 'The State of the Global Partnership for Development: MDG Gap Task Force Report 2014', New York, 2014.

172 The organization of 'Round Table' meetings between the governments of interested recipient countries and the donor community was started by UNDP in the 1970s. This process was given a new impetus by the first Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC) in September 1981. The Conference follow-up mechanism foresaw the convening of periodic meetings between each least developed country government and its main donors. The World Bank has developed a similar aid coordination forum called the 'Consultative Group'. An agreement between the two organizations precludes the possibility of a country having the two processes concurrently.

173 The United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative acts as the secretary and is currently the co-chair of the Development Assistance Group comprising 27 bilateral and multilateral development agencies active in Ethiopia. The group was established in 2001 as a forum for donors to share and exchange information and has evolved into a key aid coordination forum for Ethiopia.

174 According to OECD/DAC data, Ethiopia would have received a total ODA amount of \$28.8 billion over 2002–2012, in part through debt relief.

Bank representatives in Addis Ababa spoke to one another. However, UNDP support to MDG planning and monitoring through two successive PRSPs coincided with a strong contribution of the World Bank through the International Development Association.¹⁷⁵ The global appeal of the MDG brand, the congruence between the PRSP and MDG agendas and the quality of UNDP work and relationship with the government, the World Bank and other donors, proved instrumental in ensuring an alignment of national targets with the MDGs, the local costing and adaptation of the MDGs, their funding through ODA and national resources, and their monitoring through capacity building support to the Central Statistical Agency.

SUBNATIONAL PLANNING AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

In MDG parlance, ‘localization’ originally denoted national adaptation of the MDGs: the process by which nations modify the targets they seek to better suit a given socio-economic situation (analysed above under national planning). In this use, ‘local’ refers to the country level. After 2005, many of the countries that had opted to tailor the Goals to their national context had done so already, and the term ‘localization’ began to be increasingly used to describe a finer, subnational level of local adaptation for which significant demand was emerging. This discussion uses ‘localization’ in the latter fashion.

Finding 15. A large number of countries developed subnational MDG targets. In middle- and high-income countries, this was often a consequence of some MDG targets having been achieved at the national level already.

A large number of countries developed targets at the subnational level, whether in provinces, regions, districts or municipalities. In some cases, grass-roots projects were designed and funded as a result of MDG-based local development strategies. In others, stand-alone projects were developed to help achieve the MDGs at the local level, bypassing the national state structure, such as in the case of the Millennium Villages.

The main reason why subnational MDG planning was in such demand was the lack of national relevance of some MDG targets in middle- and high-income countries, many of which had already achieved targets such as near-universal primary education by 2000. However, all countries that achieved the MDGs on the national plane had remaining deprived areas that needed attention and support to catch up with national development levels. Among the country case studies, Albania, Belize, Colombia and Indonesia demonstrated the popularity of subnational MDG planning. In Latin America, social and regional inequalities have posed a major challenge since the 1990s, as development led to rising inequalities. Similarly, the two case study countries transitioning from a centrally planned to a free market economy, Albania and Mongolia, witnessed rising inequalities, including geographic disparities and a sharpening contrast between rural and urban areas.

Colombia provides an excellent example, given the favourable institutional context following CONPES 91,¹⁷⁶ which proposed specific guidelines for local-level MDG adaption. The UNDP *Municipios del Milenio* MDG localization project supported local institutional capacity and promoted MDG integration into subnational

175 In 2001 alone, the International Development Association provided 38.7 percent of the total net ODA to Ethiopia. See: Saasa, Oliver S., and Dunfa Lamessa, ‘Review of Development Assistance Group in Ethiopia’, August 2010.

176 CONPES 91 is a document (‘Metas y estrategias de Colombia para el logro de los objetivos de desarrollo del milenio 2015’) published by the Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (National Council for Economic and Social Policy, CONPES), the national planning authority of Colombia that serves as a government advisory body on all matters relating to economic and social development. CONPES is composed of the Ministry of Finance; National Planning Department; Ministry of Social Protection; Ministry of Environment, Housing and Local Development; Ministry of National Education; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CONPES 91 is available at minambiente.gov.co/images/normativa/conpes/2005/Conpes_0091_2005.pdf. The policy was later revised in CONPES 140, available at colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/140.pdf.

(departmental and municipal) development plans and policies in the most lagging 70 municipalities of the country. Evidence demonstrated that MDG plans enabled the rollout of MDG-based public policies in sectors such as housing, food security, health and small enterprise development. Localization was also a vehicle used by UNDP in its other MDG roles, including the publication of MDGRs in 11 departments and four municipalities.

Albania offers another interesting case of MDG localization. When the MDGs were introduced, the country's policy and political agenda revolved around meeting the reform requirements for European Union membership. Nevertheless, intense policy dialogue and advocacy campaigns by the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP convinced the government to adopt the MDG agenda. By then, Albania was a middle-income country that had already halved extreme poverty from 1990 levels and was continuing to experience solid economic growth. However, there were challenges in many social sectors, and pockets of deprivation existed in many rural areas and among marginalized groups such as the Roma. So the government decided to adapt the MDGs to their main policy agenda, that of EU membership, resulting in targets that were stricter than those of the MDGs and more in line with meeting the living standards of a would-be European nation. In addition, Albania adopted a ninth goal on governance, with targets on institutional reform required to meet European Union criteria. Albania also chose to use the MDGs to highlight regional development disparities. It was the first country to prepare regional MDGRs in each of its 12 regions, followed by regional development strategies in the Berat, Elbasan, Fier and Kukes municipalities. These strategies helped municipalities approach donors and led to UNDP and European Union-supported local projects in Kukes. In other regions, however, these development strategies prepared in the mid-2000s remained unfunded at the time of this evaluation.

In Indonesia, UNDP played an important role in localizing provincial MDG action plans and in designing and implementing MDG-focused projects in underserved areas. The provincial MDG Action Plans set targets, indicators, timelines and budget requirements as part of the effort to implement the national MDG Roadmap to Accelerate the Achievement of the MDGs.¹⁷⁷ Several projects at the local levels—including the People Centred Development Programme in Papua and the Provincial Governance Strengthening Programme—are using the tools developed by UNDP with the State Ministry of National Development Planning for incorporating human development and MDG-related approaches into data collection, analysis, planning and budgeting. For example, both projects used the Pro-Poor Planning, Budgeting and Monitoring-Evaluation tool to enable local institutions to analyse and manage poverty and MDG data; to strengthen local government capacity to identify needs, problems and priorities of the poor; and to facilitate MDG mainstreaming into regional development policies and plans for pro-poor policies and budgets.

Another consideration may have helped create demand for MDG localization in low-income countries, such as Bangladesh and Mali. MDG localization may have on occasion implicitly buttressed an implicit or explicit peace consolidation agenda by shoring up service delivery and, consequently, the state presence in regions with a history of insurgency against the state and that are now actively engaged in a negotiated peace process. Among the country case studies, examples include:

- In Bangladesh, the MAF/localization projects concerned the three districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, home to a large ethnic minority population where an insurgency against government forces raged from 1977 until the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord in 1997. This work in the Chittagong

177 Government of Indonesia, 'A Roadmap to Accelerate Achievement of the MDGs in Indonesia', Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), 2010.

Hill Tracks could have been better structured under a localization approach than the MAF, because the MAF was designed to focus on lagging goals, whereas UNDP-supported Chittagong Hill Tracts projects used an area-based multisectoral development approach, carrying over the prior UNDP-implemented recovery programme launched shortly after the 1997 peace accord.

- In Colombia, the poorest municipalities and regions where UNDP-supported MAF-cum-localization projects were implemented often corresponded to hotbeds of the FARC insurgency. The peace process occupies a central place in the political narrative in Colombia nowadays and it should not come as a surprise if the inequality agenda overlaps with this reconciliation process.
- Mali has been shaken by a security and institutional crisis subsequent to the armed insurrection in Northern Mali from January 2012 onwards. Northern Mali has a long history of insurgency and reconciliation; it is also the location of many (though not all) communes targeted by an ambitious MDG localization initiative called ‘166 Communes’ and formulated in 2007, and focused on assisting communes with the lowest levels of food security. The initiative was presented to donors on numerous occasions since 2008 but always met with concerns about delivery mechanisms in the distant and insecure north. The crisis resulted in an increase in insecurity, poverty and food insecurity in the areas targeted by 166 Communes.

More generally, poor and deprived regions are often unstable, insecure and inaccessible, so it is not surprising to find MDG localization projects focused on remote, marginal or fragile areas.¹⁷⁸

For instance, in Ethiopia, the Joint Programme on Developing Regional States—a flagship UN joint programme that involved five specialized agencies in addition to UNDP¹⁷⁹—is considered a vehicle for MDG localization and acceleration in four states lagging behind in MDG achievement: Afar, Somali, Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz. All of these regions are geographically situated at the periphery of the country’s central highlands, often ethnically diverse, with a mobile, nomadic population and porous borders with neighbouring states, including war-torn Somalia and South Sudan.

Finding 16. The local MDG planning exercises undertaken by UNDP from 2004 to 2006 in many countries were not linked to any clear funding prospect or mechanism. Efforts to cooperate with UNCDF on a more ambitious programme of support to local governments did not materialize. As a result, UNDP MDG localization projects in the examined country case studies tended to remain unfunded in ODA-dependent contexts. The same types of projects were often well-endowed in middle-income countries that funded them out of their national budgets.

Some of the instruments UNDP used to respond to MDG localization demand were rather superficial, involving rapid campaigns and MDG planning exercises. Initially (around 2004 to 2006 in most countries), UNDP supported MDG localization through a series of initiatives using volunteers, either from the United Nations Volunteers programme or the Netherlands Development Organisation, to design MDG-aligned local development plans as described in the 2005 ‘Toolkit for Localising the MDGs: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource’.¹⁸⁰ These initiatives did not typically mobilize additional funding, and thus created expectations they were

178 In the same vein, the Indonesia Medium Term Strategic Plan (2010–2014), reviewed for this evaluation, devotes its priority 10 to what it calls “least developed, frontier, outermost and post-conflict areas.”

179 Agencies implementing the UN Joint Programme on Developing Regional States in Ethiopia included UNCDF, United Nations Children’s Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization and World Food Programme.

180 Op. cit.

unable to fulfil. There were a few exceptions,¹⁸¹ and occasionally a local government managed to get its MDG-aligned development plan funded by a donor.¹⁸² In general, however, subnational MDG planning was undertaken in the absence of any clear funding prospect or mechanism.

Later on, starting from 2009, the MAF was also used as a vehicle for subnational localization efforts, typically resulting in better financial sustainability through national financing in middle-income countries.

Between these two periods, in 2008, an ambitious global project called the Joint UNDP/UNCDF Global Programme Framework and Funding Mechanism for Scaling Up Support for the MDGs at Local Level was designed to roll out MDG localization. In partnership with the Netherlands Development Organisation, UN-Habitat and UNCDF, the project intended to help local governments, civil society and other organizations draw up and implement MDG-based local plans. After organizing the first Global Forum on Local Development in 2010 in Uganda, which issued the Kampala Call to Action, this partnership faded away. Cooperation with UNCDF suffered from a fundamental disagreement between UNDP and UNCDF technical specialists on the proposed approach to decentralization. Besides, UNCDF is not a wealthy organization that can fund large-scale development programmes. As a result, UNDP MDG localization projects tended to remain unfunded in ODA-dependent countries but were well-endowed in middle-income economies, a strong indication of their national ownership and commitment.

The ART Initiative also included work in the area of local planning, often in clear convergence

with the MDG agenda. While the contribution of UNCDF remains focused on least-developed countries, the ART initiative can also operate in middle-income contexts.

The Millennium Villages in Africa present another example of MDG localization. While much controversy surrounds their viability, UNDP played a major role in their administration in partnership with Columbia University's Earth Institute and other partners.¹⁸³ Some Assessments of Development Results have described impressive physical achievements by the Millennium Villages but also questioned the project's sustainability.

More promising outcomes were achieved when the MDGs were embedded in local government structures, when local governments could raise their own revenues in addition to central government allocations, and when external funding supported decentralized institutions rather than stand-alone approaches that duplicated them. While support to local governance might require longer time-frames than handing out funds, it is potentially more sustainable. The usual challenges of decentralized approaches, such as elite capture, have of course to be managed.

MDG ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK

The September 2010 UN High Level Plenary Meeting highlighted disparities in the rates of progress across countries, subnational regions and MDGs. At the same time, country MDGRs also revealed uneven achievement at national level, both thematically and geographically. In response, UNDP developed a practical approach and tool to help accelerate progress: the MAF. The MAF was a logical extension of the MDG

181 E.g. in the Philippines, UNDP helped instil the MDGs in municipal planning through a project integrated into UN-Habitat's 'Local GAINS for the MDGs' national strategy. In 2005, UNDP established a Development Grant Programme that provided 25 grants of up to 200,000 Pesos to municipalities on a competitive basis, based on proposals that demonstrated evidence-based decision making. See UNDP, 'Assessment of Development Results: Philippines', Independent Evaluation Office, 2009.

182 E.g. the Kukes municipality in Albania.

183 See millenniumvillages.org/about/overview.

concept in its use of results-based management, offering governments and their partners a systematic way to identify and prioritize bottlenecks impeding progress towards MDG targets, as well as ‘acceleration’ solutions to these bottlenecks. Not intended for all countries, the MAF was designed to support those that showed political commitment at the highest levels, had a degree of stability to allow progress, had existing initiatives that could be built on and had a financial and human resource base that would allow progress.

This work is ongoing. As of December 2014, many of the national plans of action resulting from the MAF process were either being implemented or, more frequently, being showcased to donors for resource mobilization. Of the total 59 countries reportedly with MAFs by 2014, about one third were developed during the past two years, and most of these had not reached full implementation by December 2014, suggesting that many MAFs will not reach full implementation by the time the MDGs expire. Out of the eleven case study countries conducted as this evaluation, nine had started a MAF process, and only three were being implemented through concrete development programmes.¹⁸⁴ UNDP has internalized the fact that acceleration efforts to complete the unfinished MDG business will need to go well beyond 2015, as evidenced most recently by Yemen where the MAF Action Plan spans 2015–2018.

Finding 17. The value added of the MAF, as demonstrated in the early pilots, was to focus fragmented efforts and resources of multiple actors. Results were mixed. While some MAF action plans demonstrated their utility with nationwide replication, others were not sufficiently innovative to overcome the bottlenecks they set out to address.

The value added of the MAF, as demonstrated in the early pilots, was in focusing fragmented efforts, identifying priorities among existing plans and breaking down silos to allow new cross-sectoral partnerships. Interviewed stakeholders in Ghana, for example, were highly appreciative of the value added, particularly in building awareness of cross-sectoral bottlenecks, establishing new partnerships and increasing the political will to take national and local action, including allocating new resources.

However, the MAF process does not necessarily lend itself to identifying new ideas. Some action plans resulting from the MAF are not as innovative as the situation may require. Significantly expanding service coverage often requires a radical rethinking of service delivery methods and approaches. In any given country, social service outreach has tended to focus on the easiest communities to access. Expanding coverage therefore results in rising marginal costs to reach underserved citizens (so-called ‘last mile problem’).¹⁸⁵ Communities and regions that are lagging behind in MDG achievement are usually placed in particular circumstances that affect their capacity and willingness to develop their livelihoods, manage their environment or access clinics and schools. In such circumstances, a ‘more of the same’ approach to the problem is unlikely to work. However, in several of this evaluation’s country case studies, the MAF action plan resulted in proposed steps that appeared to be adding little to existing approaches and only recommended to redouble efforts. For instance, the livelihoods of pastoralists in Ethiopia are so different from those of most Ethiopians that reaching them would require developing tailor-made programming rather than expanding or replicating prior efforts (see Box 6).

MAF implementation has, not surprisingly, been limited in areas with less institutional capacity and

184 Fully implemented and programmed: Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia; partially implemented: Mali; completed but not implemented: Bangladesh, Belize, Ethiopia; and in development: Sudan, Madagascar.

185 Admittedly, the MDGs were not designed to solve this problem. Most MDGs were phrased in relative terms (e.g. “reduction in the proportion of...”) rather than absolute ones (e.g. “elimination of...”), with absolute goals limited to MDG 2 (universal primary education) and the closely related target 3.A (eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education). In contrast, many among the proposed Sustainable Development Goals targets aspire to end poverty and hunger.

Box 6. Bringing Health Services to Ethiopian Pastoralists

In Ethiopia, the MAF* focused on maternal health within pastoralist communities lagging behind the rest of the nation on a host of social indicators. The MAF identified an impressive list of bottlenecks, including remoteness, lack of serviceable roads, early marriage, illiteracy and unclean delivery. Perhaps most critically, these factors were exacerbated by the low confidence in health services within communities due to the health services' high staff turnover, low training quality, unwelcoming attitude of some health workers and the lack of health care provider understanding or consideration of the pastoralist way of life and regional context. In short, there seems to be a cultural gap between health workers and pastoralists, a mutual distrust and significant logistical difficulties.

Yet the solutions proposed in the MAF report were rather timid, endeavouring to "heighten the awareness of pastoralist communities on maternal health issues, so as to enhance health care-seeking behaviours" and to "strengthen partnership at subnational levels, including among community leaders, CSOs/NGOs, and private sector, for better outreach and quality service delivery." Seemingly equally important areas, such as the need for advocacy and awareness-building to change service provider attitudes towards pastoralists, went unaddressed.

* Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and United Nations, 'MDG Acceleration Framework: Accelerated Action Plan for Reducing Maternal Mortality in Ethiopia (2013–2015) in Four Regional States', Ministry of Health, November 2013.

other external constraints. The most significant external factors limiting MAF implementation were political ownership, stability and funding. Crisis caused the MAF's implementation to be stalled in Mali, and weak coordination capacity of government partners resulted in some degree of fragmentation in implementation in Ghana.

Replication of the MAFs was driven by strong national ownership, notably in middle-income countries with decentralized administrative and political structures guided by clear MDG-aligned national policies. Since 2010, the MAF tool has been used in more than 70 subnational action plans in Colombia, including in four departments and 69 municipalities.¹⁸⁶ In 2014, the national government requested that UNDP expand the MAF to 10 other regions. At the request of subnational governments, Indonesia also implemented several provincial action plans on maternal mortality since the MAF's initial piloting in Central Java.

Finding 18. Although there were examples of strong national MAF ownership, in practice the MAF was largely perceived as a UNDP product.

After leading MAF development and piloting, UNDP obtained UNDG buy-in at the headquarters level, requiring consultations with partner UN agencies. Experience to date has shown that successful MAFs must be country-led, with the government driving the process, and must take an inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder approach of a cross-sectoral nature, going beyond the sector of immediate concern. Indeed, all MAF action plans are developed jointly with the government and are typically co-led by a technical UN agency.

In practice, the sense of ownership for MAF processes as perceived by UN agencies varied. In most cases, UN partners at national level continued to see the MAF as a UNDP instrument. In Bangladesh, the process did not involve other UN agencies, partly because UNDP had been one of the few UN agencies active in the MAF target area: the post-conflict context of the Chittagong Hills Tracts. Stakeholders in Indonesia also perceived the MAF as a UNDP tool similar to other more sectoral bottleneck analysis tools such as UNICEF's Marginal Budgeting for

186 UNDP, 'MDG Acceleration Framework Colombia: Reducing Inequalities through MDG Acceleration at the Local Level', 2012.

Bottlenecks tool and the WHO's OneHealth tool. Nonetheless, the MAF was able to rally UNCT support through the UNH4+ group.¹⁸⁷ There were several notable cases where other UN agencies led MAF processes, a practice that could have happened more often.¹⁸⁸

UNDP technical assistance enabled MAF conceptualization, coordination and launch in many countries. As such, UNDP has effectively responded to the 2010 MDG Summit call to accelerate MDG progress. UNDP has been central to the MAF rollout worldwide. The MAF concept and pilot approach proved an effective mechanism to test and scale up the tool. The methodology and UNDP implementation support were generally well received by pilot country governments.¹⁸⁹ Seed funding provided by UNDP headquarters further allowed Country Offices and development partners to bring a large number of MAFs to the design phase and beyond in 59 countries by 2014.

The MAF was rolled out with a strong push from UNDP headquarters (BDP, regional bureaux), in particular in Africa and Asia and the Pacific and Africa (and less so in Latin America and the Caribbean), which, in some cases, resulted in a lack of local relevance. In Ethiopia, the MAF targeted pastoralist areas that were already the focus of the UN Joint Programme on Developing Regional States, and was also duplicated by a parallel UN joint programme operating since 2010 to improve maternal and newborn health and survival. Bangladesh's MAF in the Chittagong Hill Tracts lacked relevance in a region with many lagging MDGs that required a comprehensive effort akin to MDG localization; the attempt to make the MAF comprehensive rather than oriented towards select bottlenecks weakened the tool's core strength.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that programming and resources led to development outcomes, although it is too early to confirm. Integration of MAF action plans into government systems provided evidence of government ownership in some cases. Several countries have incorporated MAF action plans into national and subnational plans and set up institutional implementation mechanisms, which helped governments actualize commitments to MDG acceleration. In Indonesia, UNDP support to developing the MAF was followed by a Ministry of Health national action plan on maternal mortality, bringing programmes to areas with lagging progress on Goal 5. Ghana established a secretariat within the Ministry of Health to coordinate MAF implementation and integrated Goals 4 and 5 into national health plans.

Finding 19. The UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provided an effective forum to showcase the MAF process in different countries and to mobilize United Nations and World Bank support for the concerned action plans.

Starting in April 2013, high-level UN system reviews of MAF implementation through the CEB provided effective impetus for country-level implementation. CEB reviews boosted MAF visibility, the potential for UN system collaboration with the World Bank and the likelihood of MAFs securing donor funding. MAFs are presented to the CEB by the concerned UN Resident Coordinator and World Bank Country Director, a feature designed to strengthen collaboration between UNDP and the World Bank at the country level.

The forum has allowed for improved coordination at both headquarters and country levels, requiring a rigorous stocktaking of activities

187 United Nations Health 4+ (currently composed of UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, World Bank and UNAIDS) is an inter-agency mechanism aimed at harmonizing and accelerating actions to improve maternal, newborn and child health. Their support to the MAF was instrumental in Indonesia.

188 In Ghana, UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF took on lead technical coordinating roles for the MAFs. The same occurred in Dominican Republic and El Salvador.

189 UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Fourth Global Programme', Independent Evaluation Office, 2013.

related to the MAF intervention area in each country. Strong cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank was key to success, and UNDP played a significant role at the headquarters and country levels, finalizing country notes for CEB review based on inputs from UNCTs and the World Bank staff. While the CEB is not intended to provide a resource mobilization venue, it was not unusual for MAF reviews to result in new resources. In fact, about one-third of the MAFs mapped with financing commitments were reviewed at the CEB (see Table 11).¹⁹⁰ In addition, there is evidence that the CEB review process drew high-level attention and mobilized joint efforts around systemic bottlenecks that the MAF itself was not designed to address given its shorter time-frame.

Finding 20. In several middle-income countries with decentralized governance policies, MAFs were widely replicated with national resources. However, in low-income countries,

the funding upon which the MAF utility is contingent was often slow to materialize.

The utility of the MAF depends on its funding, which has been slow to materialize according to a review of available data. Only 16 MAFs, or roughly one third of the total, had mobilized financial commitments based on available data (see Table 11).¹⁹¹ Surprisingly, these resource mobilization difficulties took place in an international development climate where MDG acceleration received a high level of political and, sometimes, financial commitment. For example, in 2011, the European Union announced a €1 billion MDG acceleration initiative with MAF-based plans being eligible for support.¹⁹²

This evaluation did not attempt to assess the impact of the MAF on MDG outcomes. Such impact is likely limited at this stage, except in countries such as Colombia or Indonesia, which widely replicated the MAF.

Table 11. Funding of Selected MAFs

Country	Action Plan Date	MDG	Total Financial Commitments (source)
Armenia	December 2012	MDG 1 (employment)	\$1.1 million
Bangladesh	2013	MDG 1 and 2	
Belize‡	July 2011	MDG 7 (water and sanitation)	
Benin*	May 2013	MDG 7 (water and sanitation)	\$40 million (India); \$45 million (European Union); ~\$10 million
Botswana	March 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Burkina Faso*	August 2012	MDG1 (hunger)	\$531 million (the World Bank and the United Nations)
Cambodia	May 2013	MDG 1; MDG 3 (women's empowerment)	\$1.25 million
Central African Republic	October 2012	MDG 1 (hunger)	\$114,000
Chad	December 2012	MDG 1 (hunger)	\$985,000

‡ = Pilot MAF; * = Reviewed at CEB

(continued)

190 One must nonetheless consider an element of selection bias in which MAFs were selected for CEB review, as it would be advantageous for CEB to review countries in which something was being done.

191 The World Bank provided the largest share of external funding to the listed MAFs. The largest share of total MAF investment, however, is reportedly coming from national governments resources, though this is not systematically captured in the available data. In addition, some programmatic UN agency contributions obtained through the CEB are not reflected in Table 11.

192 UNDP, 'Accelerating Progress, Sustaining Results: The MDGs to 2015 and Beyond', 2013.

(continued)

Table 11. Funding of Selected MAFs			
Country	Action Plan Date	MDG	Total Financial Commitments (source)
Colombia*‡	September 2010	MDG1 (poverty and hunger)	\$10 million
Costa Rica	December 2012	MDG 1 (employment for the disabled)	\$652,000
El Salvador*	October 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Ethiopia	February 2014	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Ghana‡	July 2011	MDG 5 (maternal health); MDG 7 (water and sanitation)	€2 million (European Union)
Guyana	June 2014	MDG 5 (maternal health)	\$713,000
Indonesia	October 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Jordan‡		MDG 1 (food security and nutrition)	
Kyrgyzstan*	November 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Lao PDR‡	September 2010	MDGs 2 and 3 (education)	
Lesotho	October 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	\$23.12 million
Malawi	March 2013	MDG 3 (gender equality)	
Mauritania	November 2012	MDG 5 (maternal health)	\$3 million (government), \$300,000 (UNDP)
Moldova	2011	MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis)	
Nepal*	January 2013	MDG 7 (water and sanitation)	\$72 million (the World Bank)
Niger*	December 2011	MDG1 (hunger)	\$30 million (government); \$188 million (the World Bank)
Nigeria	August 2013	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Philippines*	Not published yet	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Papua New Guinea‡	Not published yet	MDG 5 (maternal health)	
Tajikistan‡	2010	MDG 1 (energy for poverty); MDGs 2, 4, 5, 7	\$65 million
Tanzania*‡	December 2011	MDG1 (poverty and hunger)	\$100 million (government)
Togo‡	May 2011	MDG 1 (rural poverty)	
Tonga	June 2013	MDG1 (hunger)	
Tuvalu	April 2013	MDG 2 (education)	\$228,000
Uganda‡	September 2010	MDG 5 (maternal health)	

‡ = Pilot MAF; * = Reviewed at CEB

Notes: This incomplete set of MAF countries was selected based on implementation stage and availability of information. MAFs at a preliminary stage whose MDG focus remains to be determined were not included. Financial commitments were calculated based on CEB documentation and MAF action plans.

4.3 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section examines the wider impact and sustainability of UNDP work, focusing on the contribution of UNDP work within its sphere of influence, and traces potential higher-order impact where possible, while acknowledging other intervening factors and the contributions of partners.

Finding 21. UNDP had a positive impact on development policy by helping conceptualize the MDGs at their onset and by mobilizing support for them. This established a wide consensus and a common basis from which to work. UNDP efforts also helped improve programme country capacity to collect and generate data on development outcomes. MDG-based national planning, strongly supported by UNDP since 2005, did not always result in significant implementation. Decentralized planning as an impact pathway was under-exploited by UNDP.

UNDP had a normative influence on development policy by helping conceptualize the MDGs and the global strategy for their implementation. In 2001, UNDP worked with the United Nations Secretariat and specialized agencies to extract a short, manageable list of morally undeniable goals from the Millennium Declaration. This contribution was fundamental in shaping the global development agenda beyond the economic perspective that dominated the structural adjustment period. This being said, the World Bank was already moving towards the poverty reduction agenda before the Millennium. Above and beyond UNDP influence on development policy, international actors now agree on the need for a global development agenda, as evidenced by the demand for the SDGs.

UNDP has had a positive impact on national capacities to collect and generate data on development outcomes. UNDP supported a wide range of governments in monitoring the MDGs,

particularly at the central level. Even in cases where national partners did not conduct any form of MDG-based planning, country MDGRs were produced, often accompanied by a greater demand for and awareness of socio-economic data. For example, UNDP supported the management of well-respected human development ‘observatories’ (*observatoires du développement humain*) in Madagascar and Mali. Belize, where UNDP started advocating for the MDGs rather late (in 2007), did not integrate the MDGs into its planning framework. However, local stakeholders acknowledged the importance of data availability as an important impact in its own right. MDGRs, well-supported by a small team of dedicated government and UN officials, have pulled together an impressive array of survey and administrative data in a country without a strong central statistical office or planning department capable of putting together a well-rounded multisectoral view of the nation’s development. The Ministry of Health is now taking the logic one step further by using monitoring of health outcomes in each of its clinics and hospitals as a way to improve quality of services, to identify structural issues and to spot poor performers. If information is power, good data can be powerful.

MDG-based national planning has been attempted in many countries but did not always translate into significant implementation. The evaluation identified several external factors that affected the utility and ultimate impact of UNDP work in this area. National ownership of the agenda, political commitment and stability were paramount. The eruption of natural or political crises rendered the MDG agenda obsolete or secondary compared to immediate priorities and took a considerable toll on MDG achievement and other social outcomes,¹⁹³ a situation further exacerbated by other economic and commodity crises in certain cases.¹⁹⁴

193 In Madagascar, the level of poverty increased after the 2002 and 2008–2009 political crises, although rising poverty was also associated with other factors.

194 In Mali, a UNESCO study documented how dual food (2011) and political (2012) crises caused the number of schools and teachers in certain northern localities to decrease by more than half. UNESCO, ‘Evaluation de l’Impact de la Crise sur le Secteur de l’Education’, 2013.

Moreover, a lack of resources evidently limits the extent to which national partners can implement MDG-based plans. In cases where domestic resources were lacking, UNDP capacity to reach out to donors was of critical importance. In this context, this evaluation confirmed the need for the UN system to closely work with Bretton Woods institutions, notably the World Bank, at both country and headquarter levels. Strong planning capacity was another key factor to guide national and subnational planning, and to coordinate government implementation. A low level of corruption is essential, since corruption tends to translate into financial losses, demotivation of civil servants and service users, and a loss of donor trust. Other influencing factors included existing statistical capacity and a data-sharing culture.

These factors often combined. For example, lack of institutional stability and policies posed challenges in Bangladesh, where UNDP faced a change in national counterparts four times during the past decade. This was compounded by both resource and capacity shortages at the national level to implement MDG-based plans.¹⁹⁵

The survey of staff conducted for this evaluation confirms this diagnosis. Most respondents selected high national ownership or commitment to the MDGs as positively influencing UNDP effectiveness, followed by the availability of national resources (85 percent and 73 percent respectively).

These external factors have operational implications on how UNDP can best focus development planning support while remaining responsive to national demands and context (see Box 7). Significant issues resulting from such factors should be identified and addressed as a priority. Before support to MDG-aligned national planning can bear fruit, UNDP may need to do a better job at partnering with donors or to invest in strengthening national planning capacity, if these appear to be significant limiting factors in a particular context.

Ethiopia provided this evaluation with an example where most determining factors converged positively. With strong political will, a high level of donor funding and domestic resource mobilization and strong planning systems, Ethiopia was able to use the MDGs to focus government attention and ODA on social sectors and fund a significant expansion of social services.¹⁹⁶ Beyond making impressive progress towards the MDGs, Ethiopia provided a proof of concept for the MDGs themselves and served as an encouragement for UNDP. The country's successes demonstrated that national efforts to implement a global development agenda such as the MDGs can lead to real progress for the poor.

On the other hand, Ghana demonstrated the fiscal limits of social service expansion: salaries and wages consume 96 percent of the national education budget in the country, leaving little room for further improvement or expansion. The MAF was credited with better coordination among line min-

Box 7. Determining Factors of MDG-based National Planning Impact

This evaluation identified several external factors that influence UNDP country-level MDG work. These include:

- Political will and stability;
- Availability of sufficient domestic or foreign resources;
- Strong planning capacity and culture, embodied by a central planning authority capable of coordinating line ministries;
- Low levels of corruption; and
- Statistical capacity and data-sharing culture.

195 UNDP, 'Senior Economist Programme Review', 2007.

196 Ethiopia's education spending increased from about 14.7 percent of total 1993 government expenditures to 24.3 percent in 2010 (World Bank, World Development Indicators website, 2014).

istries and administrations, which, combined with a thorough resource mobilization effort, led to progress towards Goals 4 and 5. To be sustainable, any social service expansion or improvement requires a parallel expansion in the government's fiscal space and capacity to manage complex delivery systems.

UNDP under-exploited decentralized planning as an impact pathway for national MDG achievement. Based on UNDP strategies and programmes, this evaluation initially focused on MDG-based planning at the national level. However, high demand for local-level planning support emerged during the course of the evaluation, and considerable evidence on local-level planning successes positioned this area of support as a pathway to impact in its own right. However, subnational MDG localization efforts suffered from a weak partnership with UNCDF. The MAF filled this gap to some extent by shaping resource allocation, particularly in programme countries with significant domestic resources, with modest UNDP technical assistance. Most notably, this occurred in Colombia and Indonesia where, with government funding, MAF pilots were scaled up nationwide.

Finding 22. The MDGs are generally seen as a success. They presided over an era of ODA increase and improved the targeting and flow of aid and other investments. However, efforts towards MDG achievement occasionally lent themselves to a 'drive for numbers' at the expense of quality and fostered a preoccupation with readily measurable outcomes to the detriment of harder-to-measure but critical areas, such as the competence of public institutions.

Without evaluating the MDGs themselves, it is important to verify that UNDP assistance to their national achievement contributed to a genuine development process with broad utility for developing nations and the poor. The MDGs still command widespread support and are generally viewed as a (at least partial) success.¹⁹⁷

This comes with several major caveats. Their degree of achievement has been uneven, and large inequalities remain among and within nations. In particular, many of the off-track MDG targets are those related to gender equality beyond primary education, which were less frequently planned and budgeted even by the governments that deliberately aligned their national development strategies with the MDGs. Moreover, it is noteworthy that only in 2010 did China prioritize in its development strategies the type of social and sustainable development concerns that characterize the MDGs.¹⁹⁸ Yet China is responsible for a significant share of the progress towards Goal 1 at the global level.¹⁹⁹ This demonstrates that MDG-aligned planning is not a necessary condition for MDG achievement.

Large increases in donor commitments to health and education were recorded after 2000. Meanwhile, the proportion of aid channelled to the productive sectors not directly covered by the MDGs has fallen.²⁰⁰ It is difficult to establish a cause-and-effect relationship, since several independent initiatives with overlapping objectives in health and education took place before and in parallel with the MDGs.²⁰¹ In particular, it is intrinsically difficult to distinguish the impact of the MDG framework from the impact of the strands

197 See for instance: Watkins, Kevin, 'The Millennium Development Goals: Three Proposals for Renewing the Vision and Reshaping the Future', 2008.







198 While previous five-year plans had placed much emphasis on economic growth and macroeconomic stability, the 12th Five Year Plan (2011–2015) addresses rising inequality, the development of China's western regions, equitable wealth distribution, increased domestic consumption, better protection of the environment and improved social infrastructure and social safety nets.

199 For instance, Target 1.A (halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day) would have been missed if not for China. Among the estimated 700 million people 'lifted out of poverty' worldwide during the MDG era, some 500 million were Chinese.

200 UNDP, 'Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in Age of Uncertainty', 2011, p.147.



201 E.g. International Finance Facility for Immunization; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Millennium Challenge, Business Alliance against Chronic Hunger; and the initiatives following the Education for All conferences in Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000).

Table 12. Global Progress towards the MDGs

MDG	Selected Target	Summary of Progress
	Reduce extreme poverty by half	The rate of people in developing regions living on less than \$1.25 a day has been halved, from about 50 percent in 1990 to 22 percent by 2010. Most of the extreme poor continue to live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
	Productive and decent employment	Vulnerable employment—self-employed workers and unpaid family workers—accounted for 56 percent of all employment in developing regions in 2013, with very slow progress.
	Reduce hunger by half	The share of undernourished people decreased from 23.6 percent in 1990–1992 to 14.3 percent in 2011–2013, but progress has slowed, with marked differences across regions.
	Universal primary schooling	The adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education increased from 83 percent to 90 percent over 2000–2012, but progress has stagnated since the early 2000s. The literacy rate for youth (defined as ages 15–24), increased from 83 percent to 89 percent from 1990 to 2012. Globally, 781 million adults and 126 million youth still lacked basic reading and writing skills in 2012.
	Equal girls' enrolment in primary school	By 2012, all developing regions achieved (or nearly achieved) gender parity in primary education; Southern Asia showing the greatest progress regionally. However, gender disparities are more prevalent at higher levels of education.
	Women's share of paid employment	Women's share increased globally from 35 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2012; the largest increases were recorded in sub-Saharan Africa (10 percentage points since 1990).
	Women's equal representation in national parliaments	Women parliament members made up 22 percent of all parliamentary seats in 2014 compared with about 14 percent in 2000, but political representation remains a challenge.
	Reduce mortality of under-five-year-olds by two thirds	The rate of under-five mortality almost halved from 90 to 48 deaths per 1000 live births over 1990–2012. Other than sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, all regions reduced their under-five mortality by more than half. Most of the 6.6 million deaths in children under age five in 2012 were from leading infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria.
	Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters	Maternal mortality dropped by 45 percent from 1990 to 2013, from 380 to 210 deaths per 100,000 live births. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest maternal mortality ratio, with 510 deaths per 100,000 live births, followed by Southern Asia, Oceania and the Caribbean.
	Access to reproductive health	The proportion of women who received antenatal care in developing regions increased from 65 percent in 1990 to 83 percent in 2012. About 80 percent of pregnant women visited a skilled health-care provider at least once. Substantial differences persist across regions.
	Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	The number of new HIV infections globally per 100 adults (aged 15 to 49) declined by 44 percent over 2001–2012. Southern Africa and Central Africa, the two regions with the highest incidence, saw sharp declines of 48 percent and 54 percent. But about 70 percent (1.6 million cases) of new infections in 2012 still occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa.
	Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases	The expansion of malaria interventions led to a 42 percent decline in malaria mortality rates globally from 2000 to 2012. Of an estimated 3.3 million averted deaths, 90 percent were children under five in sub-Saharan Africa. The rate of tuberculosis spread has nearly halted.

(continued)

(continued)

Table 12. Global Progress towards the MDGs		
MDG	Selected Target	Summary of Progress
	Halve proportion of the population without improved drinking water	The proportion of the world's population without improved drinking water was halved by 2010; those with access increased from 76 percent in 1990 to 89 percent in 2012 with the biggest rises in Asia. 748 million people still relied on unsafe drinking water sources in 2012.
	Halve proportion of population without sanitation	Almost 2 billion additional people gained access to an improved sanitation facility from 1990 to 2012. The MDG target of 75 percent coverage is unlikely to be met.
	Improve the lives of slum-dwellers	More than 200 million slum dwellers gained access to either improved water, improved sanitation, durable housing or less crowded housing conditions from 2000 to 2012.
	Address special needs of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS	Aid from OECD/DAC reached \$135 billion in 2013, a record high, but is still heavily concentrated. Levels of aid for landlocked developing countries and small island developing states stagnated or decreased since 2010.
	Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt	The debt burden of developing countries decreased from 12 percent in 2000 to 3.1% in 2012.
	Make benefits of new technologies available	The number of Internet users doubled over 2009- to 2014, but more than 4 billion people still lack Internet access. Mobile-cellular subscriptions continue to expand rapidly globally.

Source: UN, 'Millennium Development Goals Report', 2014; & 'MDG Gap Task Force Report', 2014.

of thinking that helped create the MDGs in the first place. Rwanda, for instance, used the MDGs in combination with the 20:20 Initiative stemming from the 1995 Copenhagen summit. The Education for All movement is another example of a strand of work whose impact is impossible to disentangle from the impact of the MDGs, whose contribution might best be viewed as reinforcing rather than driving the targeting of resources.²⁰²

The parsimonious number of goals and targets is widely seen as central to their impact and

appeal.²⁰³ This raises questions about the utility of the broader framework proposed for the post-2015 era, which includes over 160 targets.

A recent UN-DESA study demonstrated that ODA allocations have become MDG-sensitive (as evidenced by ODA flows favouring countries with MDG-related needs), and that multilateral aid is more MDG-sensitive than bilateral aid.²⁰⁴ Some emerging donors have also been eager to use the MDG framework for ODA delivery (notably South Korea).²⁰⁵ However, factors such

202 See Waage, J., et al., 'The Millennium Development Goals: a Cross Sectoral Analysis and Principles for Goal Setting after 2015', Lancet Commissions, *Lancet Online*, 13 September 2010; available at thelancet.com.

203 See for instance Manning, Richard, 'Using Indicators to Encourage Development – Lessons from the Millennium Development Goals', Danish Institute for International Studies, 2009.

204 United Nations, 'Is the Distribution of Foreign Aid MDG Sensitive?', by D.Hailu and R.Tsukada, UN-DESA, Working Paper 111, 2012.

205 The UN-DESA study does not capture the MDG-sensitivity of other important sources of development assistance that do not meet the ODA definition, including many forms of aid to developing nations from China (e.g. export credits, non-concessional state loans). See Brautigam, Deborah, 'Aid 'With Chinese Characteristics': Chinese Foreign Aid and Development Finance Meet the OECD-DAC Aid Regime', *Journal of International Development*, 2011.

Box 8. Schooling is Not Education!

"For the last ten years, the major focus of the global education community has been on getting children into school. And that effort has been a success: most of the world's children live in countries on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary completion by 2015.

But behind that progress is a problem—one that grows with each additional child that walks through the classroom door. Some children in those classes are learning nothing. Many more are learning a small fraction of the syllabus. They complete primary school unable to read a paragraph, or do simple addition, or tell the time. They are hopelessly ill-equipped for secondary education or almost any formal employment. The crisis of learning is both deep and widespread. It is a crisis for children, too many of whom leave school believing they are failures. And it is a crisis for their communities and countries, because economic analysis suggests it is what workers know—not their time in school—that makes them more productive and their economies more prosperous."

Source: Center for Global Development, May 2013, cgdev.org/doc/full_text/CGDReports/3120290/schooling-is-not-education.html.

as the donor country's commercial, diplomatic and military interests and its history of colonial relationships, combined with the recipient country's levels of human rights and democracy continue to be the main drivers of aid to specific countries, rather than MDG performance.²⁰⁶

The use of Goal 8 in G8 summits was noteworthy, not least at the Gleneagles Summit in 2005 with visible awareness-raising support from the Millennium Campaign. However, delivering on these promises proved a major issue even before the economic downturn at the end of the decade.

Resources required for development cannot be measured by ODA alone. As defined in Goal 8 of the MDGs, resource flows are also monitored by broader partnership arrangements including market access, technology transfer and debt relief. A central concern of Goal 8 has been to support MDG achievement through economic growth in developing countries, helped by export growth and supported by an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading system.

Finally, a concern is that the MDGs may have resulted in a lower quality of social services in some countries when social services expanded rapidly during the period. In a number of this evaluation's country case studies (e.g. Ethiopia, Mali), an expansion in primary education attributable in part to the MDGs seems to have resulted in lower education outcomes than previously recorded. This problem is increasingly being studied (see Box 8). While the quantified MDGs embodied the advantages of results-based management, it is important to remember that all such approaches may lend themselves to a 'drive for numbers' at the expense of service quality.

A related concern is that the MDG focus on certain diseases, which led to the emergence of strongly focused global funding initiatives for specific health measures and diseases (such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), de-emphasized systemic support to health systems and capabilities. From this point of view, the MDG framework may have encouraged a focus on quick gains and immediate health priorities at the expense of strengthening the competence of public health institutions to tackle emerging health

206 United Nations, 'From aid to global development policy', by J.A. Alonso, UN-DESA, Working Paper 121, 2012; and Fukuda-Parr, S., 'Are the MDGs Priority in Development Strategies and Aid Programmes? Only Few Are!' IPC-IG Working Paper 48, UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Brasilia, 2008.

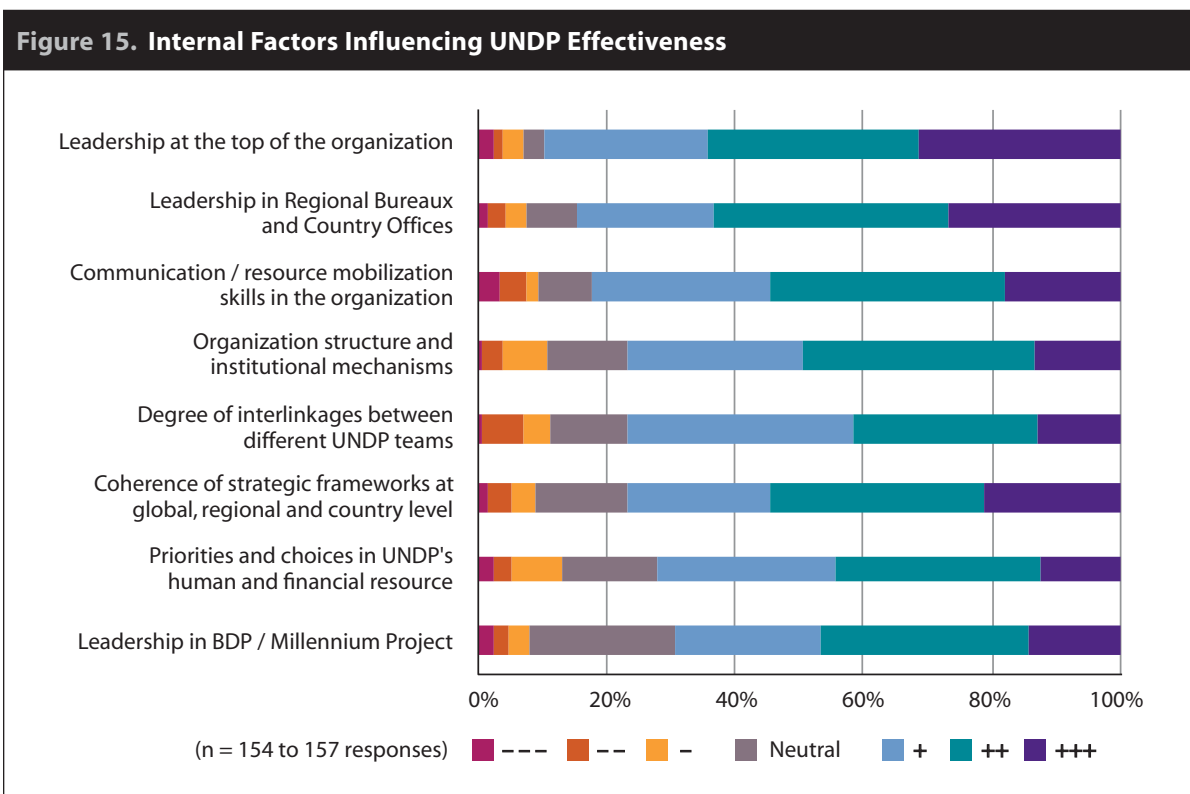
threats, such as the most recent Ebola crisis in West Africa.

4.4 EFFICIENCY AND MANAGEMENT

This section discusses the key internal management factors that shaped the UNDP contribution to the implementation of the MDGs at the country level as a way to pinpoint areas for improvement.

Finding 23. The country level was of obvious significance in operationalizing the MDGs. Country programmes accounted for about 80 percent of the estimated \$1.3 billion UNDP spent to help governments translate the MDGs into pro-poor strategies, policies and programmes. UNDP country leadership proved a major factor affecting performance at the national level.

The key role played by leadership at the top of the organization was frequently highlighted in interviews. UNDP is a hierarchical organization, and a strong push from the leadership can—and did—translate into country-level action rather efficiently. Regional bureaux played an important role by offering technical support and adapting the global offer of services to the regional and national context. The senior economist network deployed by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa throughout the region was particularly useful in this regard.²⁰⁷ In fact, some interviewed economists felt they were becoming the sole drivers of MDG support in their Country Office, particularly in the absence of strong leadership from their Resident Representative. The adaptation of MDG-aligned financial instruments at headquarter level also facilitated the use of funds in country programmes, including



207 The importance of the regional level is supported by a post-2015 paper's observation that the "regional- and subregional-level responses, in terms of MDG advocacy, monitoring, and good practices and lesson sharing have served as effective and powerful mechanisms that have pushed the MDG agenda forward." (See: United Nations, 'Review of the Contributions of the MDG Agenda to Foster Development: Lessons for the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda', March 2012).

a change in TRAC 2 allocation criteria to fund MDG initiatives.²⁰⁸

Attaining the MDGs globally depended on the combined success of national MDG implementation, emphasizing the importance of country-level work. Country programmes accounted for about 80 percent of the estimated \$1.3 billion UNDP spent to help translate the MDGs into pro-poor policies and programmes. Not surprisingly, UNDP leadership at country level also proved a dominant factor affecting performance. The Resident Coordinators provided the strategic thrust to advocate the MDG agenda at the political level with the government and facilitated UNDP support to that agenda during its initial rollout. The Resident Coordinator role in brokering and cultivating strong relationships with concerned governments, UNCT and donors set the stage for MDG programmes. By the same token, changes in leadership occasionally impacted programmes and partnerships with government counterparts and development actors. In Albania, for example, the Resident Coordinator in place during the early years of the evaluated period was a strong advocate for the MDG agenda and generated some momentum, which was subsequently lost with the appointment of a new Resident Coordinator. The new leadership felt—with good reasons—that it made little sense to push so hard for the MDGs in a country whose development agenda was dominated by European Union accession.

The importance of both the organization's and the bureau/Country Office leadership was acknowledged by the respondents to this evaluation's staff survey (see Figure 15). An overwhelming majority of respondents rated UNDP leadership positively at the global and at the country/bureau levels (90 percent and 85 percent, respectively).

Finding 24. The various areas of the UNDP MDG programme were well designed, coherent and mutually reinforcing—for example, with MDG reports feeding into campaigning and programming. One problematic exception to this coherent offer of services concerns several trust funds set up by UNDP to finance MDG-related activities, which were found to be disconnected from the mainstay of UNDP MDG work.

UNDP support to MDG achievement at the country level could be summarized as an effort to design a set of relevant products (e.g. MDG reports, MDG-aligned national development strategies, MAF) and roll out these products in as many programme countries as possible. In this effort, the organization hierarchy played the important role described above. Another key element of the strategy was to develop a set of guiding documents to help UNDP Country Offices and other stakeholders understand and use each product appropriately.

Reviewed UNDP guidance documents (see Table 13) were found conceptually clear with adequate pedagogy. Most documents scored well in all criteria except clarity of responsibilities, which lacked specific roles for certain groups identified as important to consult (e.g. civil society and private sector).

Guidance documents prepared from 2001 to 2006 scored lower on average than those produced after 2008. MDGR guidance markedly improved by expanding treatment of practical steps with added resources and illustrations for users; providing greater clarity on the MDGR role, actors and key concepts; and maintaining the MDGR relevance in the context of the global economic crisis leading up to the 2010 MDG Summit. MAF guidance documents were found

208 UNDP, 'TRAC-2 Allocation Criteria to Support National Capacity Development within the Context of the 2008–2011 Strategic Plan', Annex 1 to internal UNDP memo, December 2007. The TRAC (Target for Resource Assignment from the Core) represents the level of funding that UNDP expects to make available from resources from the regular contributions of member nations ('core' resources) during a specified period to finance UNDP programming at the country level. TRAC-1 is earmarked by country according to pre-set criteria approved by the Executive Board; TRAC-2 is earmarked by region for subsequent application at the country level based on programme quality; TRAC-3 sets aside 5 percent of UNDP regular resources for countries in special development situations.

Table 13. Average Scores of Criteria by MDG Publication

MDG Role	Publication title (date)	Criteria and score*								
		Clarity of purpose	Clarity of audience	Clarity of responsibilities	Clarity of conceptual framework	Practical guidance	Efficacy of pedagogy	Resources and annexes	Length	Total (max: 24)
MDG reporting	Reporting on the MDGs at the Country Level: Guidance Note (2001)	2	2	1.8	2	2.3	1.5	1.5	2.5	15.5
	Country Reporting on the MDGs: Second Guidance Note (2003)	3	2	2.3	2.7	3	2.3	2.7	2.7	20.7
	Addendum to Second Guidance Note on Country Reporting on the MDGs (2009)	3	2.3	1.5	3	2.8	3	1.8	2.5	19.8
	Addendum to MDG Report Guidelines (2013)	2	2	1	3	2.5	3	2.5	3	19
MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework: Operational Note (2011)	2.5	3	3	2.5	2	3	3	3	22
	MDG Acceleration Framework (2011)	2	2.5	2	3	2.5	2.5	3	2	19.5
MDG planning	Preparing National Development Strategies to Achieve the MDGs: A Handbook (2005)	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	3	2	21
	MDG Guidebook: Aligning National Development Strategies with the MDGs (2010)	3	3	2	3	2.5	3	3	3	22.5
	Toolkit for Localizing the MDGs: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource (2005)	2.5	2.5	2	3	3	3	3	3	22
	UNDP Practice Note: Localizing the MDGs (2006)	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	1.5	2	13
MDG campaign	The Blue Book: A Hands-On Approach to Advocating for the MDGs (2004)	2	2	2	2.5	2	2.5	2.5	2.5	18
Average score		2.4	2.3	1.9	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	19.4

* Scores averaged across reviewers; 0 = does not meet definition; 1 = partially; 2 = mostly; 3 = fully

of high quality across all criteria, while the quality of MDG national and subnational planning guidance varied more than in other areas.

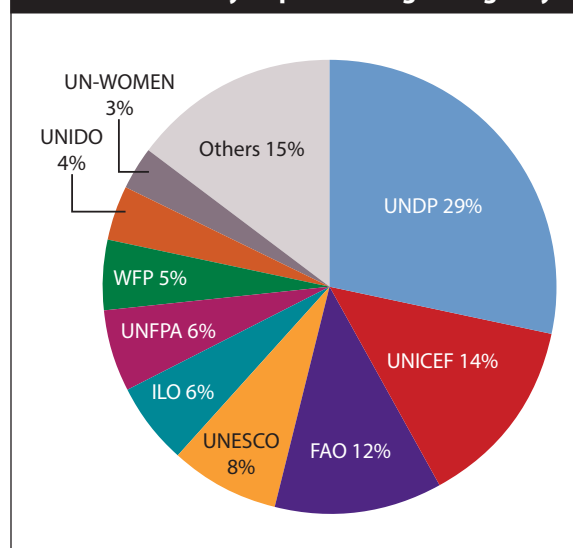
The different roles played by UNDP in support of MDG achievement at the country level were generally coherent and mutually reinforcing. MDG campaigning efforts received substantial support from other MDG streams, particularly the MDGRs that were commonly released through public events. The diagnostic value of national MDGRs increased over time with improvements in quality; at times, MDGRs helped identify MAF focus areas. MAF implementation also created opportunities for cross-practice collaboration within the UNDP architecture (e.g. between the gender and capacity development teams) and for strengthening internal coordination.²⁰⁹ In cases where MDG localization was prioritized, different streams of work demonstrated strong complementarities through an integrated programmatic approach.²¹⁰

However, the link between MDG support programmes and other areas was weak in a number of country programmes, for example, where UNDP defined local governance and pro-poor national planning under separate programmatic outcomes. This may be related to the absence of an MDG on governance.

One exception to this coherent offer of services concerns various trust funds set up by UNDP to finance MDG-related activities, which

were often disconnected from the mainstay of UNDP MDG-related work.²¹¹ The Spain-United Nations MDG Achievement Fund was conceived as a mechanism to advance MDG progress and was hosted in UNDP precisely for the visible role UNDP assumed in this regard.²¹² However, due to the modest size of its projects (\$5.1 million on average per project; \$13.6 million per country),²¹³ the MDG Achievement Fund remained largely confined to pilots and had limited synergies with mainstream UNDP MDG work.²¹⁴ UNDP received a total of \$195 million from the fund's resources, more than any other UN agency (see Figure 16). However, country case studies revealed

Figure 16. Share of the MDG Achievement Fund by Implementing UN Agency



Source: MDG-F website

209 UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Fourth Global Programme', Independent Evaluation Office, May 2013.

210 Out of the sample of country case studies, this was most evident in Colombia: subnational MDG monitoring was closely linked to planning, including the identification of bottlenecks for MAF rollout, which then leveraged the Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund to pilot employment centres.

211 Perhaps not surprisingly, the MDG Achievement Fund final evaluation rated 99 percent of the funded projects as "satisfactorily" or "highly satisfactorily" aligned with the MDGs, UN priorities and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (MDG-F, Final Evaluation, draft report 2014). Yet this does not necessarily ensure a high degree of synergies with the recipient agencies' country programmes.

212 Note that UNDP was the convener of three out of eight thematic MDG-F windows (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Democratic Economic Governance and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding).

213 In most countries, MDG-F contributed through several joint programmes. Note that these averages concern the budgets of the joint programmes combining all recipients, not only UNDP.

214 In some countries, the MDG Achievement Fund contributed \$15–25 million through joint programmes that went beyond pilot projects. National governance structures established by the fund also helped trigger partnerships that were later expanded.

limited overlap between the sort of multi-agency programmes the MDG-F has funded (including those implemented by UNDP) and UNDP support to MDG planning, campaigning or score-keeping under review in this evaluation.²¹⁵ The Millennium Villages provided another example of a funding stream that was deliberately and completely de-linked from other UNDP MDG support programmes.

This issue may explain why so many of the MDG-aligned local development plans were never funded in low-income countries: UNDP did not orient its global resource mobilization efforts to complement Country Office work. Admittedly, the more recent funds are better connected, such as the Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund. Its governance mechanism enables alignment of funded projects with the overall UNDP MDG programmes in country and globally, supporting projects that have connections with the mainstay of UNDP MDG programme priorities as a complementary mechanism in support of MDG achievement (e.g. microcredit at CEMPRENDE²¹⁶ in Colombia). Some thematic trust funds managed by the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy also provided consistent and useful financing windows for MDG-related activities, including the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund and the Poverty Thematic Trust Fund.

Finding 25. UNDP was able to quickly roll-out MDG programmes and tools at the national level through its Country Office network but was less efficient in learning from

on-the-ground experiences of its national staff and partners. There were attempts at sharing MDG programming experiences through networks and events, but no systematic effort to monitor successes and failures. Key areas of UNDP documentation concerning country-level experiences in the evaluated area were found to be incomplete.

Its field presence and hierarchical structure enabled UNDP to efficiently deliver MDG support, as evidenced by the large number of country programmes where UNDP supported MDG-based planning, MDGR production and the MAF rollout. Regional bureaux played an important role by offering technical support and by adapting the global portfolio of services to regional and national contexts.²¹⁷

Where UNDP was less efficient—and this runs as a thread throughout the review of the different roles in the previous section—is in learning from country-level experiences. Knowledge management was unidirectional, flowing from headquarters to Country Offices. There were some exceptions, such as the MAF being initially piloted in a few countries and then scaled up based on pilot country experiences. However, UNDP did not systematically monitor MAF implementation beyond the pilots.²¹⁸ Episodically, UNDP has conducted stock-taking exercises, but this was not a strong or permanently embedded feature of a regular monitoring system. There was no sustained attempt at monitoring successes and failures, which echoes a recent performance audit of UNDP monitoring practices.²¹⁹

215 There were a few exceptions, including MDG-F partnerships with the United Nations Millennium Campaign on campaigning in several countries and MDG-F support to the MDG Report from an indigenous perspective in Latin America, entitled 'La Otra Visión: Pueblos Indígenas y los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio', 2013.

216 Centros de Empleo y Emprendimiento, a network of centers for small entrepreneurs.

217 E.g. the 2013 UNDP research papers on MDG lessons in the Europe and the CIS region presented at the Global MDG Conference in Bogotá in February 2013 and at the UNECE poverty measurement seminar later that year.

218 UNDP 'Accelerating Progress, Sustaining Results' (2013) reviewed the follow-up to the pilot phase, but this evaluation team was not able to acquire exhaustive or up-to-date information on MAF implementation as of 2014–2015.

219 A recent audit of UNDP monitoring highlights severe organizational issues, including the lack of a written monitoring policy and problems with data aggregation at the portfolio and country programme level, making performance monitoring and reporting difficult. See UNDP, 'Performance Audit of UNDP Monitoring Practices', Office of Audit and Investigations, Report No. 1397, February 2015.

Key areas of UNDP documentation concerning country-level experiences in the evaluated area were found to be incomplete.²²⁰ UNDP documentation in terms of country-level MDG achievements were generally more cheerful than analytic. This was understandable, since campaigning for the MDGs was an important role and included its fair share of cheerleading both inside and outside the organization. However, it may also have prevented UNDP staff from openly questioning the organization's *modus operandi* in the MDG area and may have translated into a lack of consistent tools and channels to learn from both successes and failures at the country level.

Quite naturally over such a long implementation period, staff rotation affected institutional memory on MDG support. This is particularly true for those who worked in the Millennium Project, many of whom left UNDP or found positions elsewhere in the organization after the end of the project in 2006.

4.5 PARTNERSHIPS AND POSITIONING

UNDP did not work on these issues alone. Its strategy involved numerous partnerships with a range of actors, including governments, other UN organizations, international financial institutions, donors, academia, civil society and the private sector. Understanding UNDP's contribution relative to its partners' entails situating UNDP support within its institutional context, analysing how UNDP worked with others to support MDG achievement, examining how it used its comparative advantages in forging these partnerships and determining whether MDG support has strengthened or weakened UNDP's positioning within the development assistance arena and how this support has affected UNDP's capacity to forge alliances in the future. This will also help identify factors that have consistently affected performance.

Finding 26. The MDGs helped the United Nations and UNDP recapture some of the policy space lost to structural adjustment and a growth-centric view of development.

The MDG era was one of resurgence and revitalization for UNDP, which recognized early on the possibilities and potential impact of the MDG agenda. This early recognition allowed it to position itself to play a major role in shaping the MDGs and to make the agenda its central focus. Prior to the MDGs, UNDP's budget was falling. The organization seemed to be ageing both literally (in terms of the age of staff) and in terms of effectiveness. Its relevance itself seemed to be in question. In many ways, the advent of the MDGs helped reverse some of these trends. UNDP seemed to regain some financial space, reclaim a leadership role on the global development stage, maintain its role as provider of policy and planning advice to governments and embark on some relatively new roles in campaigning and scorekeeping.

UNDP's comparative advantages relevant to the MDG agenda include its:

1. Extensive network of Country Offices;
2. Coordination mandate for UN agencies;
3. Cross-sectoral mandate on human development;
4. Neutrality and convening power;
5. Trust of developing countries' governments;
6. Access to associated funds and agencies such as UNCDF, United Nations Volunteers programme and the Global Environment Fund; and
7. Access to global networks of expertise and South-South cooperation.

Schematically, UNDP employed the first five of these advantages to various degrees in its support

220 For example, the websites listing national MDGRs were incomplete as of December 2014.

to the MDGs at the country level; the last two remained underutilized.

UNDP's close working relationships with governments were instrumental in securing a role in PRSP preparation processes. The World Bank had led the preparation of early PRSPs, which involved rather superficial governmental consultations. UNDP became increasingly engaged in supporting the PRSP process in response to requests from programme countries themselves.²²¹ More generally, UNDP has had a long history of helping developing countries plan for their development. Its support to aligning national development plans with the MDGs drew on this experience and built on the links previously established with planning commissions and ministries.

The Secretary-General selected UNDP as scorekeeper of the MDGs at the country level because of UNDP's wide network of Country Offices, its mandate to coordinate UN agencies, its convening power and its cultivated relationships with developing country governments. UNDP had a limited track record in statistical data management, although the national Human Development Reports established a certain capacity in poverty monitoring.

The campaigning role was more unusual because UNDP did not have much skill in mass communication prior to the MDG era. It overcame this capacity gap by using a range of partnerships in different aspects of its campaign strategy, from the Stand Up campaign implemented with international NGOs to specific partnerships with journalists (including awards for MDG-related journalism) and partnerships with MDG ambassadors in numerous countries.

Both the Millennium Campaign and the Millennium Project were established under UNDP's administrative responsibility, but were

branded somewhat artificially as non-UNDP entities. In the case of the Millennium Campaign, the goal was for it to operate "at arms-length to regular UN bodies" in order to better attract civil society organizations.²²² The Millennium Campaign directors were selected in light of their capacity to reach out to non-UN audiences. For the Millennium Project, the aim was to broadcast it as a UN-wide effort rather than as an exclusively UNDP unit. This strategy yielded both benefits (e.g. both the Millennium Campaign and the Millennium Project operated with a greater degree of freedom and creativity as a result) and costs (e.g. a less coherent institutional framework with less potential for synergies).

The MDG period saw increased levels of coordination between UNDP and the World Bank, such as in PRSPs and the agreement between the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to use the CEB as a forum to help accelerate MDG progress. This gave new impetus to United Nations and World Bank collaborations, particularly as concerned the MAF.

At the country level, the quality of this relationship with the World Bank remains heterogeneous with long-entrenched rivalries surviving in some Country Offices of both organizations. At the country level, personal relations matter as much as global corporate strategies. In the low-income countries included as case studies for this evaluation, the degree to which MDG-aligned plans were being implemented depended in part on the quality of the local World Bank-UNDP relationship. The World Bank is a sizeable donor with a strong influence over other donors. In aid-dependent countries, large-scale investment plans and strategies are more likely to be implemented if the World Bank supports them. Similar considerations apply to regional development banks.

Finding 27. The MDGs both strengthened and tested UNDP's relations with UN specialized

221 UNDP, 'Evaluation of UNDP's Role in the PRSP Process', Independent Evaluation Office, 2003.

222 United Nations, 'United Nations and the MDGs: A Core Strategy', Office of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2002.

agencies. The Goals’ holistic, cross-sectoral nature implies a tension with the sectoral agendas of specialized agencies, which often considered the MDGs as too simplistic. Agencies’ involvement in the preparation of national MDG reports and MAFs was useful, though often insufficient.

Just as Kofi Annan pushed for a *rapprochement* between the World Bank and the United Nations, he sought a greater collaboration among UN agencies. With this aim, he introduced the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, created UNDG, strengthened the Resident Coordinator system and launched Delivery as One. However, the evaluation found that UNDP was often viewed as playing a dominant role to the exclusion of specialized agencies, even when they would have been better placed to speak on behalf of specific MDGs (e.g. health agencies for the health MDGs). This was a common, though not ubiquitous observation.

The relationship with specialized UN agencies was brought to bear significantly in MDG monitoring at the country level and in the MAF, for which a UN-wide process was mandated by the relevant guidelines, but less so on other roles. Even in those cases, the scope for specialized UN agency involvement remained minimal in many countries. In its policy advisory and planning roles, UNDP generally controlled a privileged position compared to other UN agencies. UNDP seldom drew on UN partner expertise or technical specialization for these roles. In the Delivering as One countries that were chosen as case study countries for this evaluation (Albania, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mali), there was little sense of ‘sisterhood’ between ‘sister’ UN agencies. In particular, the scope of the joint programmes remained minute relative to the rest of the portfolio (albeit with some exceptions, such as the Joint Programme on Developing Regional States in Ethiopia).

Efforts to support MDG localization suffered from a weak partnership with UNCDF. A guidance note on joint technical support (2007) and a project proposal to scale up support to MDG localization with UNCDF (2008) were drafted but, sadly, never implemented due to differences of opinion between UNCDF and BDP technical advisers regarding how to best support localization. This evaluation confirms that the approach championed by BDP at the time was somewhat superficial and tokenistic: merely instilling some MDG language in local development plans is unlikely to change anything. As for other specialized agencies, UNDP showed little interest in utilizing the expertise of UNCDF in this programme area.²²³

Patience may be a virtue here. The time and effort required to build partnerships, engage in policy and technical dialogue and build ownership of processes translates into delays in moving from concept and design to delivery. For example, a number of evaluation survey respondents noted the extended time needed to carry out consultations and prepare MAF action plans. Moreover, some UN agencies may be unwilling to cooperate irrespective of UNDP’s coordination efforts.

Further, the holistic cross-sectoral nature of the MDGs implies a tension with the sectoral agendas of specialized UN agencies, which often considered the MDGs as too simplistic. From this perspective, UNDP benefited from the MDGs because they provided the organization with a clearer (if incomplete) articulation of its cross-sectoral mandate—whereas specialized agencies did not derive such a benefit from the Goals.

Finding 28. UNDP partnered well with CSOs in democratic, open societies. Somewhat predictably, CSO engagement was often perfunctory in less open political contexts. Relations with the media and the private sector were found to be minimal.

223 UNCDF’s 2014–2017 Strategic Plan underscores the need for strong synergies at the strategic, programmatic and operational level. It also indicates “missed opportunities in working with others, including UNDP.”

UNDP partnered well with CSOs, especially in democratic societies. This partnership was particularly effective for implementing advocacy campaigns aimed at building citizen and civil society awareness and engagement so as to strengthen the government's resolve to adopt and pursue the MDGs. In countries with more authoritarian governments, civil society involvement was often cursory and superficial, typically through NGOs with links to the government.²²⁴

Relations with the media and the private sector were found minimal in most countries, with the exception of a few campaign activities and the launch of the MDG reports in press conferences.

The Millennium Campaign made a deliberate effort to reach out to broad segments of civil society and faith-based organizations. NGOs acted as regional nodes. The Millennium Campaign partnered with many global and African NGOs in particular. The high credibility of senior campaign staff among civil society helped greatly. For example, Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, a renowned Nigerian intellectual and pan-African activist, served as the African campaign coordinator from 2006 to his untimely death in 2009.

Finding 29. The much broader agenda of the SDGs compared to the MDGs will anchor UNDP's work on governance and resilience in

Table 14. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Table 14. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats	
<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust of government • Convening power • UNDG chair and UN Country Team coordination • Access to the United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations General Assembly, UN-DESA, the World Bank, donors, etc. • Strong hierarchical structure and a network of Country Offices • Historical engagement in human development • Fair degree of coherence and team spirit 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statistical mandate, capacity and culture • Bureaucracy • Cannot stand up to governments in certain contexts, while scorekeeper role requires a capacity to check government data • Weak capacity to learn from Country Office failures and successes • Modest financial resources • Technical expertise unstable, not evolving with needs • Low staff morale due to recent restructuring
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDGs represent a broader, more universal development agenda, including governance and resilience • Preparedness for the SDGs in certain countries (based on consultation processes) • Acceptance/consensus on human development • Convergence of relief and development into the resilience agenda and merging of BDP/BCPR • Rise of the South and South-South cooperation • Access to UNCDF technical known-how in decentralization 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparent lack of strategizing for the SDGs shift in UNDP • Possible evolution from a coordinating role to a purely sectoral one on governance, resilience and poverty • Broad nature of the SDGs will require much more from UNDP than what was needed for the MDG, e.g. in monitoring • Lack of resource mobilization for mainstream UNDP work (and parallel rise of disconnected, 'special purpose' trust funds like the MDG-F) • Closure of the ART initiative in December 2015 may reduce UNDP support to decentralized planning

224 The contrast between closed and open societies, borrowed from Karl Popper, is of course a bit theoretical. In practice it is in fact a continuum of more to less open societies.

the global development agenda. The agenda may risk changing UNDP's contribution from a cross-sectoral to a sectoral one.

The MDGs formed an ambitious development agenda. Any global organization tackling such an agenda would naturally face a wide range of internal and external impacting factors. Table 14 summarizes these factors in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) as a way to strengthen the recommendations with some perspective on the opportunities and threats awaiting UNDP as it enters the post-2015 era.

The SDGs cover much wider ground than the MDGs. This expansion could give UNDP more room to build on its strengths in sustainable human development. Less positively, it could dilute UNDP's contribution, changing it from cross-sectoral to sectoral (e.g. highly focused on governance, poverty and environment, while other agencies address other sectors). In contrast,

UNDP's role in the MDGs was more to combine, promote and monitor the *entire* agenda.

Operationally, the recent restructuring in merging BDP and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery into the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support could be a major advantage in helping UNDP take leadership of the resilience-building elements in the post-2015 agenda. Such a resilience-building approach will become increasingly relevant as the incidence of natural disasters will likely increase, particularly given the impacts of climate change.

This being said, the 2013–2014 UNDP reform affected the teams that worked on the MDGs. The restructuring also generated some anxiety as to whether or not UNDP is sufficiently strategizing for the shift to the SDGs. The sustainable development space is very crowded; many actors are jockeying for influence. A clear and actionable strategy for UNDP's future will be crucial to contribute effectively to the new development agenda.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this chapter are based on the findings presented in Chapter 4. An element of interpretation is necessarily involved in moving from findings to conclusions. However, this evaluation has endeavoured to minimize the subjective element inherent in any interpretation by remaining as objectively close to the findings as possible. Recommendations attempt to focus on broad policy issues relevant at the country programme level, rather than on the details of design and implementation of individual projects and programmes.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: The basic concept of the Millennium Development Goals as well as the strategy and tools for United Nations support envisaged at the onset of the period by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, his office and the UNDP leadership have been largely validated by experience, as evidenced by the wide adoption of the Goals in national plans; the contribution of monitoring to maintaining interest; or the higher degree of collaboration observed at the global and country levels between United Nations agencies and international financial institutions.

The fact that many countries, groups and individuals were keen to take part in the conversation about the post-2015 set of goals and targets that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals is a tribute to the value of the Goals themselves. There is wide agreement among development actors that there is a need for a global development agenda such as the Millennium Development Goals, and therefore that the Goals cannot be allowed to expire without being replaced by a new framework.

Conclusion 2: UNDP has designed and rolled out an impressive set of diverse and complementary tools in support of Millennium Development Goal planning, monitoring and implementation. Generally speaking, the guidelines and products reviewed were of high quality and well timed. As can be expected, implementation in the field varied greatly in scope and quality.

Maintaining commitment to the Millennium Development Goals agenda throughout the period proved a challenge. Within UNDP, the momentum was slow to build with the initial four to five years of the ‘MDG era’ essentially devoted to campaigning and research. Momentum has also slowed somewhat in the last several years with the combined effects of the preparation for post-2015 discussions and the institutional restructuring of UNDP.

Conclusion 3: The successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals required consensus and collaboration among all development actors, including among United Nations agencies. However, in its support for the Goals at country level, UNDP could have used the expertise of the specialized agencies to a greater extent. Their limited involvement emerged as a weakness in the preparation of national MDGRs, in the elaboration of the MAF and in efforts to localize the Goals.

The MAF in many countries is perceived as a UNDP-led endeavour and product, despite the tool having been reviewed and endorsed by UNDG. Yet the most successful MAFs in the sample (e.g. Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia) were those being supported by a broader group of stakeholders, including of course the concerned government, but also the relevant technical UN

agencies as well as international development banks. This practice brought about a measure of technical soundness and a critical mass of support and funding, which was reinforced by mechanisms such as the CEB reviews of MAFs at headquarters. Similarly, the involvement of UN specialized agencies in MDGRs is critical to screening the reported data and interpreting it correctly in their area of specialisation.

Working with others evidently takes more time, is more complex and can be more frustrating than working alone. Yet the Millennium Development Goals were conceived as a United Nations-wide project and their successful implementation requires consensus and collaboration among development stakeholders, including United Nations agencies. This issue is not entirely the fault of any one UN agency, but UNDP is responsible for UN coordination in country and thus bears a unique responsibility compared to other agencies.

Conclusion 4: UNDP has often failed to translate its support into tangible development programmes and funding streams. More than half of the reviewed planning initiatives related to the Millennium Development Goals at the national or local levels remained unfunded at the time of the evaluation. Something is amiss when there is excessive attention to planning at the expense of thinking through means of implementation in a realistic manner.

Planning without taking into account means of implementation is poor planning at best, and at worst amounts to tokenism. Such tokenistic Goal-related planning potentially undermined the credibility of the Millennium Development Goal agenda, and locally it raised expectations of financial assistance which UNDP was unable to fulfil.

UNDP depends on its partnership with governments and donors to translate any international agenda into reality at the local level. Making this partnership work in a realistic manner was the key to success during the Millennium

Development Goal era. The increased collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations in country and at the level of the CEB augurs well for the new agenda. Partnerships with the private sector, which were weak during the Goals' era, will now be essential for success.

Conclusion 5: Where and when resources were available and used judiciously, some countries' drive to implement the Millennium Development Goal agenda through ambitious policies translated into a significant expansion of social services at field level, proving that aligning national development strategies with the Goals can contribute to their achievement even in the poorest countries. These successes led to further challenges, such as a deterioration in the quality of education outcomes that was clearly linked in some countries to a rapid expansion in primary school coverage.

Beyond mere access, cost and quality of service are shaping up as major issues. Historically, service outreach efforts have naturally tended to focus on the easiest communities to access, and expanding coverage therefore leads to rising marginal costs to reach additional citizens (the 'last mile' problem). Similarly, rapid expansion of services has been associated with a deterioration in the quality of service in some countries. Educational outcomes in particular have declined in a number of countries reviewed in this evaluation as a direct result of efforts to provide universal primary education.

Conclusion 6: UNDP is well positioned to approach the post-2015 era and help countries achieve the SDGs, but the emerging post-2015 agenda is significantly more comprehensive and complex than the Millennium Development Goal targets, and it will undoubtedly test the capacity of the United Nations to 'deliver as one'. Approaches similar to the MAF and national adaptation of the Goals will be increasingly required during the SDG era, in order to translate the all-encompassing SDG agenda into strong priorities at the local level.

While the post-2015 agenda still needs to be negotiated, agreed to by governments and adopted by the General Assembly, enough is currently known to draw some conclusions. The SDG agenda will be much broader in terms of what is included, which will cover the unfinished basic human needs goals of the Millennium Development Goals but also other dimensions of a broader sustainable development agenda (e.g. inequality, inclusive economic growth, urbanization, ecological sustainability), as well as the governance agenda (e.g. human rights, access to justice and rule of law, peace and conflict). This means a much longer list of goals, targets and indicators. In theory, a larger number of countries will find elements of the agenda relevant to their development needs, but to translate the lengthier SDG agenda into clear, measurable pro-poor outcomes at the country level will represent a serious challenge, requiring a quantum leap in terms of implementation and statistical capacity and costs, and thus a greater sense of focus than was called for by the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, monitoring of human rights and governance is fundamentally more political and requires a greater independence from governments than the monitoring of basic needs like access to water, health and education. As such, monitoring the SDGs will test the neutrality of the United Nations system.

As for UNDP, the SDGs will better anchor its work on governance and resilience in the global development agenda. UNDP will also be well placed to continue supporting national and local authorities and advance the post-2015 agenda on the basis of its experience with the Millennium Development Goals, mandate and traditional comparative advantages in terms of its field presence, trust of governments, convening power, neutrality and coordination role. The set of tools that UNDP has supported at the country level—to monitor, report, plan, budget and programme about the Millennium Development Goals—will remain broadly relevant after 2015 when applied to the SDGs.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As UNDP approaches the post-2015 era, it clearly needs to reflect on the tools, strategies and partnerships it will bring to bear in supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, some unfinished MDG business remains.

Recommendation 1: UNDP should organize a last round of MDG country reports (end-line reports) in 2016–2017 to measure progress over the entire period covered by the Goals, establish baselines for the SDG era and identify lessons learned and good practices. This will allow UNDP to establish programmes on a strong empirical basis about what forms of support worked during the MDG era and what did not. UNDP should continue support to the ‘unfinished Goals’ even after 2015, by helping focus development efforts on the poorest countries as well as pockets of deprivation within middle- and high-income countries.

The last round of reports will require funding to be made available to countries, as previously arranged for the MDG reports leading up to the MDG Summits in 2005 and 2010, and should be combined with an initial analysis of countries interest for the SDGs (recommendation 4).

The post-2015 agenda will widen the horizon, from the almost single-minded focus on poverty that was the defining characteristic of the Millennium Development Goals, to a much richer agenda that hopefully will still include the eradication of extreme poverty along with many other goals. There is a risk that the fight against poverty, whether in low- or middle-income countries, will be de-emphasized by governments and development partners. UNDP must ensure that due attention and resources remain targeted to the poorest countries, and within a country to the poorest regions and households, even after 2015.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should continue to provide Member States and UN organizations with guidance and thought leadership at

the level of the entire SDG agenda on how to translate the post-2015 agenda at the national and subnational levels by establishing clear local priorities, while maintaining some degree of comprehensiveness and coherence with the global agenda.

The present sectoral activities of UNDP in good governance, crisis and recovery, environment and poverty are well covered in the emerging post-2015 development agenda. UNDP could therefore opt to support only those specific SDGs that match its mandate and sectoral work, as specialized United Nations agencies probably will do. Over and beyond such sectoral contributions, the experience of UNDP in cross-sectoral work and its United Nations coordination mandate make a strong case for UNDP also to provide Member States and other organizations some guidance and thought leadership at the level of the entire SDG agenda, as it did for the Millennium Development Goals.

Given the likely long ‘menu’ of future SDG targets and indicators, there is a risk that some countries may pick and choose a few SDGs reflecting their core national areas of interest, and drop the rest of the agenda. While recognizing the need for local adaptation and the responsibility of developing nations to set their own development agendas, UNDP can help maintain some coherence to the SDGs as a whole by researching and raising awareness about the links between different goals. In this capacity, UNDP thought leadership work potentially will provide added value, highlighting the trade-offs that are inherent to the concept of sustainable development and proposing pragmatic ways to negotiate these trade-offs between the different goals, using a ‘whole of government’ approach.

Recommendation 3: While the post-2015 global agenda presents new challenges, the roles UNDP played during the Millennium Development Goal era will remain useful and should be carried forward and enhanced for greater effectiveness, as follows:

- a) **Coordination: A greater level of coordination among United Nations agencies and a more active engagement on behalf of UNCT members will be required to effectively support the highly technical SDG agenda.** At the global level, the CEB should continue to review the implementation of the approved MAF action plans, as well as that of SDG plans and progress at the country level through a ‘MAF successor’ that would help prioritize areas of the SDGs;
- b) **Campaigning: A continuation of the Millennium Campaign will be necessary to promote an understanding of the SDGs worldwide, but with a better connection with UNDP regional bureaux and Country Offices to ensure a wider geographical coverage of the campaign.** In spite of the participatory process through which the new goals were developed, the final collective global agreement will be somewhat different from what any individual country, institution or person wanted. With the core of SDGs defined, the time has come for the United Nations system to work collectively on a ‘re-education programme’ to ensure that the new targets and indicators defined at the global level are understood in the country context. This should involve an orientation of senior UNDP leadership (Resident Representatives, Country Directors, Deputy Resident Representatives) on what the SDGs are and what their role will be;
- c) **Scorekeeping: UNDP should continue its coordinating role in country-level reporting and monitoring against the SDGs, and continue to invest in the quality of the data, in particular through more prolonged and in-depth technical engagement with the UNCT and the World Bank during report preparation.** The SDGs will use much more comprehensive data sets, requiring a quantum leap in statistical capacity. UNDP will do well to maintain its current focus of coordinating the production of reports at the country level, drawing on its clear comparative advantage

at this level, on the capacities already built and on the technical expertise of specialized agencies. It might also wish to consider a stronger role of the World Bank in the production of the SDG reports, so as to bring to bear its greater capacity to produce, manage and interpret economic data. Each SDG report should include a transparent discussion of the quality and limitations of the data;

d) **MAF: As a matter of urgency, a new tool for bottleneck analysis will need to be developed with broad participation from United Nations agencies and the World Bank in order to sharpen the SDG focus at the national or subnational levels.** The post-2015 development agenda is meant to be universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development. Local customization of goals and targets may therefore happen at a much broader scale than was the case for the Millennium Development Goals. A new tool will be necessary, developed and piloted as a joint United Nations effort, to make it more receptive to innovative thinking and to learn from similar tools developed by specialized agencies. Reaching a sharper focus at the country level is also the vocation of the common country assessment, which could use some MAF-inspired analysis techniques;

e) **Policy and planning: UNDP must train its eye on the real goal: a change in the lives of the poor.** While it should continue to help align national development plans with international goals (cf. Recommendation 4 below), it should also work on financing and delivery mechanisms with a view to bring lofty strategies down to earth and deliver real services to real people. UNDP will also have to rely more on its core comparative advantage in the area of sustainable human development, since even within UNDP, many policymakers think of sustainable development as environmental management. Significant work will be required for them to understand the

economic, social and ecological balancing required and what this means for policy and planning;

f) **Initiatives at the decentralized level: SDG monitoring and planning at the subnational level will remain important, especially in the light of leaving nobody behind and addressing themes of social exclusion and inequality.** UNDP and UNCDF should sort their differences and combine their efforts in a more proactive way, recognizing that UNCDF brings its unique capacity and expertise on decentralization, while UNDP has better access to governments and donors at the upstream policy level. A continuation of the ART-Global Initiative beyond its scheduled termination at the end of 2015 would also appear desirable in view of the fact that UNCDF can invest only in least developed countries.

Recommendation 4: UNDP support to countries and local governments in tailoring, planning and implementing the SDGs at the national and local levels should take into systematic consideration key local factors known to influence the effectiveness of goal-based development planning, so as to focus assistance on countries and regions with good prospects for implementing their SDG-based plans and policies.

The capacity of UNDP to customize and adapt its products and services to the needs of specific countries is an important strength that will need to be further enhanced to develop a context-driven SDG support programme. This evaluation has found a series of factors that have negatively affected the likelihood of countries to implement their MDG-aligned plans. In order to target UNDP development planning support and resources on countries with good prospects for implementing their SDG-based plans and policies, the strategy of support to the SDGs should therefore be rooted in an initial political economy analysis that maps interest in the SDGs at the national level, and assesses the prevalence

of key factors known to influence the effectiveness of goal-based development planning. Where these key contributing factors are not yet in place, UNDP should try and advocate for them as a prerequisite to any meaningful SDG-based planning.

Recommendation 5: In order to support country programmes and learn from field-level experiences in SDG implementation, UNDP should establish and maintain over time a cadre of dedicated advisers at headquarters and in regional hubs, able to support the SDG work of regional bureaux and Country Offices over the long term, bring coherence to the overall effort and maintain some institutional memory. UNDP should document the varied approaches that will be used at the country level in a more systematic and objective way than has been the case so far. Resource mobilization and the management of trust funds also need to be brought into a more coherent framework to support country-level activities.

The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support needs to find ways to monitor consistently, systematically and over the entire SDG period: (a) its own advisory services in support of the

SDGs; (b) the varied approaches used by UNDP Country Offices to support SDG implementation at the country level; and (c) SDG-related results across programme countries. Online forums, workshops and reviews have helped connect United Nations staff implementing the Millennium Development Goals, but information needs to be distilled further in order to learn from different countries' experiences. UNDP should explore methods to incentivize staff to document failures as much as successes, since one can only learn from a consideration of both.

UNDP should continue to invest resources in initiatives directly targeting communities for sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals/SDGs, but should do so in coherence with its upstream work, for instance via greater use of seed funding that could facilitate uptake and scaling up of innovations. The practice of setting up specific projects and units at arm's length from the regular UNDP structure (e.g. the Millennium Campaign and Millennium Project) did not yield significant benefits and should be avoided as it only translates into greater disconnect between different strands of work.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

At its 2013 second regular session, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Executive Board agreed that the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) carry out a thematic evaluation on the “role of UNDP in supporting national achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”²²⁵ The Board noted the high strategic importance of MDGs and the potential to extract lessons learned for the post-2015 global development agenda. The evaluation will be presented at the June 2015 session of the UNDP Executive Board.

The evaluation will be carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy with the following purposes: (i) provide substantive support to the Administrator’s accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board; (ii) support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners; (iii) serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions globally; and (iv) draw lessons from UNDP’s role in support of MDGs achievement to inform UNDP’s strategy of support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerging from the post-2015 agenda.

2. BACKGROUND

The Millennium Declaration in 2000 and associated MDGs constitute an internationally

agreed set of quantifiable and time-bound goals to advance human development at the national and global levels. Over for the last decade, they grew into representing the central development ‘paradigm’, by identifying clearly dimensions where improvement is necessary for assuring equitable and sustainable progress. In the words of David Hulme,²²⁶ they are “the world’s biggest promise—a global agreement to reduce poverty and human deprivation at historically unprecedented rates through collaborative action.” The MDGs differ from other global poverty reduction goals²²⁷ in their comprehensive nature and in the systematic efforts taken to finance, implement and monitor them.

In particular, the MDGs have shaped the UNDP programming framework to a considerable extent since 2000. The focus of UNDP’s work in support of MDG achievement has changed over time. While the organization was initially focused on raising awareness and ensuring stakeholder buy-in about the MDGs through a series of campaigns, after 2005 its focus moved on to supporting the incorporation and mainstreaming of MDGs in national development strategies e.g. through estimating the cost of achieving MDGs in specific countries (MDG costing), preparing MDG-consistent macroeconomic frameworks, or aligning poverty reduction strategies on the MDGs. Since 2010, it concentrated on directly supporting specific countries in the achievements of lagging MDGs through the MDG acceleration framework (MAF).

225 UNDP, ‘Report of the second regular session 2013 (9 to 13 September 2013, New York)’, DP/2014/1, October 2013.

226 Hulme, David, ‘The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A Short History of the World’s Biggest Promise’, Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper 100, September 2009.

227 Hulme cites as precedents to the MDGs F.D. Roosevelt’s ‘Four Freedoms’ (1941) and the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights stipulating that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care.”

In 2001, the Secretary-General nominated the UNDP Administrator to act as the coordinator and ‘score keeper’ of MDGs in the UN system.²²⁸ The second UNDP multi-year funding framework for 2004–2007 states that its strategic goals were “influenced by the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals which represent the overarching basis for all UNDP activities over this period.”²²⁹ One of its four goals was entitled: “Achieving MDGs and reducing human poverty”²³⁰ and its strategy set out to support upstream pro-poor policy reform as well as poverty monitoring framed within the MDGs. At the country level, UNDP aimed to work with national partners to develop national MDG targets, establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms, plan national MDG reports, mobilize public support, and support the identification of achievements and prevailing challenges.²³¹

The 2005 World Summit (14–16 September 2005) was convened as a follow-up summit meeting to the Millennium Summit. It urged every country to adopt and implement development strategies taking into account the MDGs. From there on, the emphasis in UNDP support moved to policy advisory services to help countries to develop MDG-based national development

strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs).²³²

The subsequent UNDP Strategic Plan²³³ for 2008–2011 highlighted “the urgent need for additional efforts by the international community” to achieve the MDGs by 2015 for all developing countries but particularly for the least developed nations, landlocked countries, and small island states.²³⁴ Among the areas of UNDP support, the Plan sets out to integrate the pursuit of MDGs into national development strategies and to “analyse data to help governments decide on the relative prioritization and allocation of resources for health, education, irrigation, transport, and other sectors.”^{235 236} With the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008–2009, concern grew about the ability to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and even about the potential for reversals in development gains. In preparation for the 2010 MDG Summit, UNDP published studies²³⁷ leading to its MDG Breakthrough Strategy (May 2010), which encapsulated the MAF with the objective of helping countries overcome slow and uneven progress and meet the 2015 deadline.

The 2010 MDG Review Summit (20–22 September 2010) concluded with the adoption of a consensus outcome document to accelerate

228 UNDP, ‘Second Multi-Year Funding Framework, 2004–2007’, DP/2003/32, August 2003. For further reference see: undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/SGs%20letter.pdf.

229 UNDP, ‘Second Multi-Year Funding Framework, 2004–2007’, DP/2003/32, August 2003.

230 The same formulation or a similar one tying MDGs and poverty alleviation was used in UNDP documents over the years to describe one of the focus areas of the organization.

231 Cumulatively, the second Multi-year Funding Framework’s Service Lines 1.1 (pro-poor policy reform) and 1.2 (preparation of MDG country reporting and monitoring) constituted 38 percent (\$1.341 billion) of expenditure within the Achieving MDGs and reducing poverty goal over 2004–2007.

232 UNDP had nonetheless been supporting MDG-based national planning, including related to PRSPs, since 2002.

233 The Strategic Plan replaced the multi-year funding framework as the core strategic planning document for the UNDP.

234 UNDP, ‘Strategic Plan, 2008–2011’, DP/2007/43/Rev.1, 2007.

235 UNDP, ‘Strategic Plan, 2008–2011’, DP/2007/43/Rev.1, 2007.

236 UNDP expenditure within Achieving MDGs and reducing poverty goal was concentrated in two corporate outcomes over the 2008–2011 period: (i) MDG-based national development strategies; and (ii) enhanced national and local capacities to plan, monitor, report and evaluate the MDGs and related national development priorities. The former constituted 48 percent of expenditure within the practice area (\$1.729 billion) and the latter 18 percent (\$654 million).

237 Including UNDP, ‘Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the MDGs’, January 2010; and UNDP, ‘What Will it Take to Reach the MDGs: an International Assessment’, September 2010.

progress towards the eight anti-poverty goals. With the 2010 Midterm Review²³⁸ of the UNDP Strategic Plan and its extension to 2013,²³⁹ UNDP adjusted its development results framework regarding the MDGs to align some of it with the MAF approach. Subsequently, the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan kept a focus on the MDGs, even as it spans the period of transition to the next development agenda. Three outputs under the Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework are of relevance to the present evaluation: 7.1. Global consensus on completion of MDGs and the post-2015 agenda informed by contributions from UNDP; 7.2. Global and national data collection, measurement and analytical systems in place; and 7.3. National development plans to address poverty and inequality.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the roles played and results achieved by UNDP in supporting national achievement of the MDGs;
- To identify the factors that have affected UNDP contribution and performance,

including: strengths and weaknesses; threats and opportunities; what decisions, strategies and approaches have worked and what have not; and

- Based on the above, to provide strategic recommendations for fine tuning the institutional strategy of support to the post-2015 SDGs.

4. SCOPE

UNDP’s support to the achievement of MDGs is provided through a broad range of initiatives at global, regional and country levels. In fact, all of UNDP’s work can be understood as aiming to contribute to MDG achievement one way or another, since the Goals were set as its strategic foundation beginning with the multi-year funding framework II (2004–2007) continuing through the Strategic Plan (2008–2013).²⁴⁰

Evidently, the MDG evaluation cannot assess the whole of UNDP. Therefore the scope has been narrowed to **the tools and approaches that UNDP used to explicitly support MDG achievement at the country level**. The following lines of work have been identified, with those proposed for evaluation in the left-hand column:

In Proposed Scope	Out of Proposed Scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP’s role as a ‘champion’ of the MDGs (e.g. Millennium Campaign and other advocacy and influencing efforts) • UNDP’s role as a ‘score keeper’ of MDG reports, MDG Monitor and MDG Gap Task Force • Technical assistance and policy advisory to develop and scale-up MDG-based development strategies at the national, subnational and sectoral levels— including applied research of the Millennium Project and of the BDP MDG Group (which took over the UNMP’s role in 2007); needs assessment and costing; MDG-consistent macroeconomic framework and financing strategies; parliamentary support; MDG localization; and the MDG Acceleration Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDG Achievement Fund (‘Spanish MDG Fund’) • Millennium Villages • MDG Carbon Facility and climate proofing

(continued)

238 UNDP, ‘Midterm Review of the UNDP Strategic Plan and Annual Report of the Administrator’, DP/2011/22, April 2011.

239 UNDP, ‘Report of the First Regular Session of 2009’, DP/2009/9, June 2009.

240 The Strategic Plan reaffirmed achievement of internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs, as its basis and recognizes capacity development as UNDP’s overarching contribution in assisting programme country efforts to achieve the MDGs.

(continued)

In Proposed Scope	Out of Proposed Scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal UNDP mechanisms to prioritize MDGs—trust funds: the Millennium Trust Fund and the more recent Joint Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund; regional initiatives for MDG planning, implementation and monitoring;²⁴¹ and other institutional mechanisms²⁴² • Relevant country programmes and projects in support of efforts to monitor and achieve the MDGs 	

The evaluation will cover the period from 2002–2014, i.e. since the beginning of the Millennium Campaign, which was the first significant programmatic involvement of UNDP.

The initiatives proposed for evaluation are focused predominantly on upstream policy advice, advocacy, awareness raising and progress monitoring. However, evaluating MDG localization, parts of the MAFs and the Joint Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund may imply reviewing a limited amount of downstream work.

It is proposed **not** to evaluate the Millennium Villages²⁴³ because evaluating them would be a project in itself. The MDG Achievement Fund was also excluded, primarily because it was recently evaluated. The results of its evaluation should nonetheless be taken into account. The present evaluation may thus be in a position to summarize evaluative evidence concerning these interventions without embarking on a full-fledged evaluation of the initiatives themselves. Country case studies may also need to describe these interventions in some detail and collect secondary evaluative evidence about them.

Appendix 1 provides a more detailed description of each role and the rationale behind including or excluding them.

Much of the above work involves other UN entities, NGOs and charitable institutions, and national governments. In some of these initiatives, UNDP is not a leader but a partner. Opportunities for joint evaluations were explored, but to no avail. As a result, the evaluation may have a limited capacity to attribute success to UNDP, given the inter-partner nature of much of the processes involved, the fact that MDG outcomes are influenced by many external factors and the absence of a counterfactual (i.e. an identical world without the MDGs). The evaluation will focus on documenting UNDP's **contribution**, not necessarily to higher-level impacts (i.e. country achievement of MDGs), but rather at the outcome level within UNDP's sphere of influence (e.g. formation and/or implementation of MDG-based national policies), while acknowledging other intervening factors and the contributions of partners.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions below form a tentative set that will be expanded based on further desk study and interaction with key UN/UNDP actors. The set of questions was collected through interviews with key informants, and structured thanks to a detailed analysis of the

241 E.g. work with international financial institutions on the Gleneagles Scenario in the Africa Region; MDG Africa Steering Group initiative; partnership with the African Union, ECA and the Asian Development Bank on progress reporting in Africa, and with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, create and monitor South-Asian development goals; MDG Initiative in Asia Pacific; MAquette for Millennium Development Goals Simulations-based approaches in Latin America and the Caribbean; Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific regional programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction.

242 UNDG-MDG Task Force, CEB and UN System-wide communication.

243 A set of 12 rural African communities receiving significant and prolonged support to lift them out of poverty and demonstrate that MDGs can be achieved at a reasonable cost—implemented in association with the Columbia University Earth Institute.

result frameworks and impact pathways to which UNDP is trying to contribute, modelled through a 'theory of change' (ToC) presented in Appendix 2 to these terms of reference.

Relevance: Was the UNDP support to MDGs relevant to programme countries' needs and consistent with the organization's mandate?

1. What roles did UNDP play in, *inter alia*:
 - a) the design of the MDGs, the provision of thought leadership and policy advice for MDGs at global, regional and national levels;
 - b) MDGs communication and advocacy;
 - c) monitoring or scorekeeping of their achievement;
 - d) coordination for MDGs within the UN system and beyond;
 - e) localization of the MDGs (alignment of national planning targets and MDGs + support to MDG planning at the subnational level); and
 - f) implementation of grass-roots delivery programmes aimed at achieving the MDGs?
2. Were these different roles appropriate and relevant? Which areas made the best use of UNDP's mandate and strategic advantage, including *vis-à-vis* other UN system partners and why? Did the different roles and lines of work add up to form a coherent set of activities? Was UNDP's variety of roles conducive or detrimental to its effort to reach out to other UN agencies?
3. Were the MDGs, and UNDP's support to them, perceived as relevant by all nations and stakeholder groups alike, or were there variations based on income, region or other factors? Was UNDP's support better fitted for some countries than others? E.g. how relevant and useful were the different MDG tools for countries of different income levels? How proactively did the organization adapt to differences in national context? E.g. how did UNDP interventions to help achieve the MDGs vary across countries to

reflect the degree of political commitment to the MDGs? To what extent was UNDP able to assist countries in making the MDGs and their targets relevant to their own specific contexts and adding to them where appropriate?

Effectiveness: What results did UNDP achieve in support of the MDGs?

4. What was the quality (defined as fitness for purpose) of the UNDP technical assistance and extent of the financial assistance provided in each of the roles (thought leadership and policy advice, communication and advocacy, coordination, monitoring, implementation)? Were the approaches taken by UNDP to support these roles all effective, and was the assistance found useful? Did UNDP build significant national capacity in the various roles? Was UNDP's value added across the different roles and lines of work considered critical, important or somewhat peripheral? Describe typical results achieved in each role. E.g.:
 - a. Did UNDP effectively facilitate government integration of the MDGs into policy, legislation and national development plans? Did the research and strategies make a compelling case for additional official development assistance (ODA) needs to achieve MDGs?
 - b. Did UNDP help monitor MDG progress through collaborative, transparent and neutral processes and tools? How credible and influential were the data emanating from the monitoring role and from the MDG costing exercises²⁴⁴ What has been the primary use of the monitoring information and reports, and by what users? Did MDGRs/monitoring catalyse debate on MDG application at the national and global levels, or influence policy and national priority programmes?

244 UNDP monitoring initiatives such as the MDG Monitor will be assessed within the context of other UN and multilateral initiatives such as the annual Global Monitoring Report (World Bank and IMF since 2004) and the global MDG Report (UN-DESA since 2005).

- c. How effectively was the MDG agenda communicated? Did UNDP campaigns help secure national/global stakeholder buy-in of the MDGs? Was it useful to help disseminate the MDGs, raise the awareness of states, communities and development actors and impart a sense of urgency about MDGs? Were national governments and donors responsive to pressure from civil society, lobbying efforts and other advocacy tools? Did they respond with MDG-based strategic and policy reform?
- d. Did the MAF result in tangible benefits in the locations and sectors where it was implemented?²⁴⁵ More generally, were the implementing strategies developed by UNDP considered credible and useful by other partners? Where applicable, was the support provided to improved delivery of services and/or to the implementation of MDG-based strategies and programmes found useful, and did it help reach the poorest segments of society?
5. Did the different results listed above have important synergies, support one another and add up to more than the sum of their parts? E.g. applied research strengthens credibility of goals for wider mobilization efforts; MDG projects demonstrate credible results to test and scale-up poverty reduction strategies; consensus on MDGs helps define credible and realistic strategies; MDG monitoring is more holistic and effective if well-coordinated with different UN agencies and international organizations, etc. Were these synergies actively explored and used?
6. What impact did UNDP's activity in support of the MDGs have on policies and funding patterns (including national budget allocations, ODA budgets and policies, and private sector funding)? Did the UNDP/UN-DESA MDG Gap Task Force and other UNDP involvements in aid mobilization (e.g. round tables, aid for trade) help mobilize resources for the MDGs? In countries where UNDP helped mainstream the MDGs into budgets, national policies and development plans, were these actually implemented? What external factors have most influenced UNDP's effectiveness in this area (e.g. level of national ownership, funding available, democratic governance, region, income levels, crisis-affected countries, etc.)?
7. At the higher impact level, it is expected to be very difficult, if not impossible, to assess how the work of UNDP has impacted on MDG achievement or contributed to benefits for the poorest locations and segments of society. Admittedly, attribution to UNDP will be quite tenuous at that level. However, the evaluation team may be in a position to document or suggest a number of 'impact pathways', e.g. assess in some cases whether better access to social services resulted in poverty reduction. This could be based on research papers or interviews with key informants.
- Efficiency: How efficiently did UNDP use its resources to support MDG achievement?**
8. Was UNDP able to change its programmatic focus to reflect the MDGs and prioritize MDG support across its practices and work-streams? Did the organization develop appropriate and useful guidance for its own staff and partners in all the work strands? Was the organizational setup within UNDP effective and consistent over time?
9. Given that MDGs touch on many practice areas, how effective were the internal mechanisms set up to coordinate UNDP's work, and how strong were the interlinkages between different teams and areas of work? Was the approach multidisciplinary? Was the UNDP strategic policy framework consistent globally, regionally and at country level? Did the focus on MDGs distract from or reduce

²⁴⁵ It may be too soon to measure results in terms of outcomes, but one can look into the efforts and immediate outcomes.

focus on other important areas of UNDP activity, or on the contrary did it make them more effective?

10. Which other internal factors have most influenced UNDP's ability to perform in this area? E.g. what trade-offs did UNDP have to make with regard to resource allocation, such as decisions made to allocate resources to certain initiatives *vis-à-vis* others, including human resources allocation, and the relative emphasis placed on different roles?

Positioning and partnerships: How did UNDP work with others to support MDG achievement?

11. How effectively did UNDP use its comparative advantage (e.g. coordination mandate, neutrality, convening power, links to UN Secretariat, access to the CEB and other UN agencies) to help forge a consensus behind the MDGs in the UN system, with international financial institutions and bilaterals, and to seek efficient collaborations for their implementation? Was the allocation of work within the UN system done according to its mandate and/or its comparative advantage?
12. Did UNDP play a catalytic role for promoting the convergence of efforts by different actors? Did it identify and partner with key players endowed with critical strengths? Did it pilot important, successful initiatives that other actors replicated? Did UNDP work with civil society and the private sector to leverage their comparative advantages? Where relevant, did its participation in Delivering as One programmes contribute to more efficient support to national partners?
13. Did UNDP's roles as MDG campaign manager and scorekeeper help strengthen its positioning within the development assistance arena? Did the MDGs help UNDP position itself as a relevant actor in policy advisory *vis-à-vis* international financial institutions and bilaterals? To what extent was UNDP's role complementary to the advocacy role of others, including the Secretary-General?

Sustainability: Are the results documented in the evaluation sustainable or likely to be sustainable?

14. Are the results documented in the evaluation sustainable? E.g. wherever applicable, is it likely that the results achieved through the MAF will be sustained once UNDP's assistance is withdrawn? How effective was UNDP in helping develop local capacities for assuring country's long-term involvement and support with the MDGs? Was the institution more effective in developing capacities for specific actors (e.g. governments, civil society and other national partners)? To what extent was UNDP capacity development support institutionalized by national partners in government and civil society? Was there a strategy to strengthen institutions and systems to ensure sustainability in the build-up to 2015? In countries and areas where UNDP has withdrawn its support, have MDG-related capacities and processes been maintained?

Risks: Are there risks and challenges to UNDP's work on the MDGs?

15. What were the main risks or challenges found along the way that had to be bridged in order to play the intended role? The evaluation should also explore possible unintended consequences (positive or negative) of UNDP's work, e.g. the opportunity cost of a strong focus on the MDGs.
16. What external shocks and risks threaten(ed) progress towards the MDGs (e.g. food and energy price shocks, economic and financial crises, political crises)? Did UNDP recognize them in a timely fashion and what was done to contain them?

Finally, and as a way to contribute to a more formative (forward-looking) assessment, the evaluation will need to describe UNDP's involvement in the design of the **post-2015 agenda**. However, this aspect may be too recent to evaluate critically, and was therefore not included in the evaluation questions.

Based on the responses to the above questions and on an analysis of what did and did not work in supporting the MDGs, the evaluation will recommend how UNDP can best complete its MDG support work and move ahead to support the next set of international development goals, likely be approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

6. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will rely on multiple sources for data collection and mixed-methods for analysis, validation and triangulation of evidence against the evaluation questions. Sources of data and methods of collection will include:

- Review and administrative data analysis;
- Interviews at UN/UNDP headquarters;
- Interviews with representatives from other UN agencies, World Bank, IMF and OECD/DAC;
- Twelve country case studies to collect in-depth information on outcomes at the country level (with additional interviews with government representatives, donor representatives, UNDP staff, etc.);
- Statistical analysis for identifying regional trends of interest (e.g. changes in government spending by sector and by MDG);
- A synthesis of evidence from prior global evaluations,²⁴⁶ relevant ADRs and outcome evaluations;
- A cybermetric analysis and social network analysis may be undertaken of knowledge

platforms and communication products linked to MDG advocacy;

- A structured critical review of the guidance notes issued by UNDP headquarters on the MDGs;
- A virtual debate on MDGs on Teamworks; and
- A questionnaire survey targeted to UNDP staff having a strong involvement in MDGs.

The country case studies (CCS) are meant to collect rich information about complex, multi-strand UNDP engagement at country level. The evaluation used a purposeful sampling approach to capture the variability of factors and conditions that occur across programme countries. The sample was selected using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a social sciences method that helps describe and analyse complex causal pathways and interactions among causal factors.²⁴⁷ Based on a desk review and preliminary interviews with key informants, a number of factors likely to affect UNDP's performance and results at country level were identified, such as the current state of development of the programme country; levels of ODA; the UNDP regional bureau involved;²⁴⁸ the comprehensiveness of UNDP's engagement across a range of roles; and the level of expenditures germane to MDGs. These factors were used to inform the sample selection process.

The proposed countries and programmes are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The last column of Table 1 indicates alternative countries that could replace the proposed country in case the latter could not be included in the sample.

246 Including the global evaluations of the Millennium Campaign; the recent final independent evaluation of the MDG-F; IEO series of evaluations of the global programme and of all regional programmes; the IEO evaluation of the strategic plan; and the IEO evaluation of UNDP contribution to poverty reduction.

247 Qualitative Comparative Analysis provides a better foundation for generalization across cases than less formal and more purely qualitative uses of case studies. In effect, QCA is thus a means to increase analytic rigor in the selection and analysis of case studies, so as to strengthen their 'external validity', i.e. the extent to which the results of the case studies can be generalized to other cases.

248 UNDP's regional bureaux and Regional Service Centres played an important role in rolling out different MDG-related tools.

Appendix 3 offers a more detailed description of the country case study sampling process.

The sample of country case studies includes a few countries with a medium or low level of UNDP engagement in order to understand why UNDP had a lower level of engagement in some countries than in others. To determine whether a critical mass of activities was required to achieve impact, the sample over-represents countries with a high degree of engagement. It would make little sense to spend too much time and resources studying countries where UNDP has not done much in terms of MDG support. The resulting bias should be taken into account during analysis and interpretation of results.

As part of the country case studies, individual and focus group interviews will be conducted with primary stakeholders, including government agencies, UN agencies, donors, private sector and community-based organizations. Semi-structured interviews will be used to collect data from key informants in the Executive Board, UNDP senior management, UNDP Regional

Service Centres and Country Offices and relevant staff in UNDP and partner agencies. A survey of Country Offices' MDG focal points will be undertaken and cross-checked with existing survey results.

UNDP's work on the MDGs encompassed the global, regional and country levels. While primarily focused on results achieved at the country level, the evaluation will need to document and review global and regional processes and results as well as those are intrinsically linked to country-level results and will help explain and contextualize them. At the regional level, visits to several regional centres and contacts with key regional groupings (e.g. African Union, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations) will complement country cases in order to cover key regional processes and stakeholders.²⁴⁹ At the global level, the evaluation will conduct an extensive desk review, interviews at UNDP Headquarters and interviews with representatives from other UN agencies, World Bank, IMF and OECD/DAC.

²⁴⁹ Ethiopia was selected as country case studies in part for this reason, in addition to having an interesting MDG national portfolio in its own right.

Table 1. Proposed Country Case Studies with description of MDG work

#	Proposed country	Human Development Index	UNDP engagement	Net ODA (% Gross National Income)	Description of MDG work (based on Results-oriented Annual Reports and Country Office websites)	Alternative country
Africa						
1	Mali	Low (0.344)	High	High (10.21)	Portfolio of various MDG streams: the '166 communes' to accelerate MDGs in the most vulnerable communities; identification of preliminary indicators to monitor MDGs, and MDG costing exercises for the national, regional and sectoral levels; a MAF report on food security and nutrition, identifying certain interventions to be urgently scaled up.	Niger
2	Ethiopia	Low (0.396)	High	High (7.86)	Portfolio of various MDG streams: development of regional MDG-based poverty reduction strategies (2006–2008), capacity building for monitoring and reporting of MDGs; support to the 2006–2010 national development plan (PASDEP I and PASDEP II; public awareness-raising initiatives; a MAF has been approved to be released in 2013 regarding maternal health. Presence of regional centre.	Malawi
3	Ghana	Medium (0.558)	High	Medium (4.69)	Long-running MDG-related support: PRSP; capacity building for national/district MDG-based planning; supported National Development Planning Commission, Statistical Services and Environmental Protection Agency to manage and accelerate MDG related issues; MDG-based medium term strategy linked to annual budget; MDG Parliamentary Committee; 2011 MAF report on maternal health based on 2010 MDGR.	South Africa
4	Madagascar	Low (0.483)	Low	Medium (3.91)	Light upstream (PRSP) work: project to support the national planning framework; Four MDGRs through 2011, the latest of which is planned to contribute to a MAF.	Guinea-Bissau
Asia-Pacific						
5	Mongolia	Medium (0.675)	High	Medium (4.68)	Limited portfolio focused on monitoring/reporting: long-running \$3m pilot project since 2005 on the National Poverty and MDG Monitoring and Assessment System (PMMS); a smaller project also supports dialogue and monitoring for the MDG-9 on Human Rights and Democratic Governance; Three MDG reports produced.	Nepal
6	Cambodia	Medium (0.543)	High	Medium (6.06)	Large portfolio with relevant MDG work: ongoing projects to link policy and practice for MDG acceleration to reduce poverty, focusing on policy options for inclusive growth, resource management, scaling up of successful finance initiatives and in democratic governance area for aid management to achieve Cambodian MDGs (CMDGs), most applicable to MDG8; MDG campaign activity to build awareness at provincial level (2004–2006); MDG-based national development plan (2008–2010); Spanish MDG-F project.	Bhutan

Table 1. Proposed Country Case Studies with description of MDG work

#	Proposed country	Human Development Index	UNDP engagement	Net ODA (% Gross National Income)	Description of MDG work (based on Results-oriented Annual Reports and Country Office websites)	Alternative country
Asia-Pacific (continued)						
7	Indonesia	Medium (0.629)	High	Low (0.01)	Extensive MDG work: policy advisory to formulate MDG-based plans/budgets; a MAF provided technical support to national and provincial MDG teams in the development of action plans + subnational MAF on Maternal Health for Central Java (Oct 2013); support to the national MDG Secretariat; monitoring and evaluation framework for MDG acceleration managed by BAPPENAS; multi-stakeholder platform for the national/local government, CSOs and the private sector.	China
8	Vietnam	Medium (0.617)	Medium	Medium (2.76)	Policy and stats support with limited explicit connection with MDGs: policy support to the formulation of national strategies and plans (SEDS 2011–2020, SEDP 2011–2015, Social Protection Strategy 2011–2020); support in 2008 improved the availability/quality of statistical data & use for MDG monitoring + MDG reports.	Myanmar
Latin America & Caribbean						
9	Colombia	High (0.719)	Medium	Low (0.22)	Policy and monitoring support, MAF and Korea TF: UNDP provided support for MDG measurement and analysis at national and subnational levels (three MDGRs since 2007), assisted in the elaboration of policy documents incorporating MDGs (CONPES Social 91 in 2005, and CONPES Social 140 in 2011), launched a MAF project in 2011 (on municipal-level service delivery), and a Korea TF project has funded nine job centres to offer business counselling, entrepreneurship training, and career opportunities to vulnerable groups.	Honduras
10	Belize	Medium (0.702)	Medium	Low (1.56)	Small portfolio with various MDG streams since 2004: Three MDG reports; MAF on water and sanitation; country projects on a) MDG needs and costing; b) support to the production of a growth and poverty reduction strategy; and c) advocacy to “increase the popular awareness of the ‘social’ MDG concepts and contents.”	El Salvador
Arab States						
11	IEO proposed Jordan or Yemen. Both were deemed unsuitable by RBAS (Yemen Country Office evacuated; Jordan Country Office extremely busy). Regional Bureau for Arab States is looking at possible alternatives.					
Europe & CIS						
12	Albania	High (0.749)	Medium	Medium (2.74)	Small-scale support notably in area of MDG nationalization/localization: efforts to ‘MDG-ize’ local development plans in Europe & CIS were pioneered in Albania in 2003–2005, including examples of government local development programmes using disaggregated MDG targets/indicators. Four MDG reports. Several ongoing projects promote social inclusion (disability rights, Roma, women, etc.), youth employment, and civil society empowerment, not explicitly linking to the MDGs.	Turkey

Table 2. Proposed Country Case Studies and MDG Strands

#	Country	Region	Campaign & awareness raising	Policy Advisory & MDG Costing	MDG Monitoring & Reports	Number of MDG Reports	MDG Localization	MAF	Korea TF	Other country specific projects	Number of MDG strands in country
1	Mali	Africa	0	1	1	5	1	1	0	0	4
2	Ethiopia	Africa	1	0	1	5	1	1	0	1	4
3	Madagascar	Africa	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	2
4	Ghana	Africa	1	1	1	7	1	1	0	1	5
5	Mongolia	Asia-Pacific	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	4
6	Indonesia	Asia-Pacific	1	0	1	5	0	1	0	1	3
7	Cambodia	Asia-Pacific	1	1	1	5	0	1	0	1	4
8	Viet Nam	Asia-Pacific	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	3
9	Belize	Latin America & Caribbean	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	3
10	Colombia	Latin America & Caribbean	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	5
11	?	Arab States	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
12	Albania	Europe CIS	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	1	4
Total / average			5	9	11	4.3 (average)	5	6	2	7	3.7 (average)

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The IEO will conduct the evaluation and has the overall responsibility for the conceptualization and design of the evaluation, managing the evaluation process and producing the final evaluation report for presentation to the Executive Board. An Advisory Panel will be constituted by March 2014, consisting of two experts in the field of evaluation and development: Miguel Szekely and Jayati Ghosh.²⁵⁰ The panel will play an important role in providing strategic, methodological

and substantive inputs into the evaluation process as well as review the key outputs including the main evaluation report. A Technical Reference Group will be constituted in June 2014, comprising representatives of regional and policy bureaux representatives, who will participate in discussions on evaluation findings and conclusions. The Organizational Performance Group has the responsibility of reviewing the draft Terms of Reference and draft evaluation report and providing consolidated comments from programme and policy units.

250 See full list of the IEO Advisory Panel at: web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/advisory-panel/EvaluationAdvisory%20Panel.pdf.

8. EVALUATION TIMELINE

Output/activity	Proposed period
Concept paper preparation	February 2014
Evaluation launched with concept paper	February
Establish Advisory Panel (AP)	March
Share ToR with AP	March
Share revised ToR with Organizational Performance Group	March
Finalized ToR	End-April
Recruitment of evaluation team	May
Technical Reference Group (TRG) established	June
Data collection	June-July-August
Analysis / synthesis	August
Sharing emerging findings and conclusions with AP and TRG	August
Report drafting	September-October
Sharing zero draft with the Advisory Panel	End October
Incorporate Advisory Panel comments	Early November
Share first draft with UNDP management	Mid November
Incorporate UNDP management comments	Early December
IEO reviews and clears report	Early January 2015
Final unedited report shared with UNDP management	13 January
Board paper to EB Secretariat	22 February
Executive Board informal on draft findings, conclusions and recommendations	TBD
Editing and design	March/April
Final PDF report uploaded on EB website	22 April
Executive Board formal presentation of report	June 2015

Appendix 1 to the Terms of Reference:

SCOPE ANALYSIS

#	Items	Description	Main geographic focus				Pro- posal	Rationale
			Global	Regional	National	Local		
1	Millennium Trust Fund	Established in UNDP in 2002 to support the implementation of the UN strategy for achieving the MDGs, the Trust Fund has principally financed the Millennium Campaign, Millennium Project, and the MDG monitoring and reporting work of UNDP.	xxx				In	Global, but was one of the earliest moves by UNDP and funded the Millennium Project (historical value)
2	MDG Achievement Fund	Set up in 2007 with a \$900 million contribution from Spain, the MDG-F finances MDG-related projects involving several UN agencies, in order to promote a One-UN approach.			xxx		Out	Already evaluated, result of evaluation should be used
3	Joint Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund	Established in November 2009 to support MDG achievement globally and in Least Developed Countries. The Fund has contributed \$22.85 million to 10 country and five global projects with the aim of supporting innovative, catalytic and sustainable approaches for multiplier effects and accelerated progress towards MDG achievement. ²⁵¹			xxx		In	At the country level, non-traditional donor, focused on LDCs scaling up MDG initiatives
4	Millennium Campaign	Hosted in UNDP, the Millennium Campaign is an inter-agency initiative to support citizen participation to achieve MDGs, guided by a UNDG MDG Task Force. Over the 2008–2012 period, the Millennium Campaign had a \$29.7 million budget with on average 20 regular staff and five professionals hosted by UNDP in New York. ²⁵²	xxx	x	xx		In	Largely global but central to UNDP's role at first and there are interesting country-level results.

251 Colombia, DRC, Haiti, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan and Timor-Leste.

252 The Millennium Campaign's major outputs involve: (i) building partnerships with key constituencies in poverty reduction, such as CSOs, faith-based organizations, media and celebrities; (ii) supporting government partners in the development of MDG campaign strategies; (iii) organizing awareness-raising events such as the Stand Up Against Poverty initiative; and (iv) managing MDG promotion campaigns, such as Public Service Announcements.

#	Items	Description	Main geographic focus				Pro-posal	Rationale
			Global	Regional	National	Local		
5	Millennium Project	Launched by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown and headed by Jeffrey Sachs, the UN Millennium Project aimed to determine the best strategies for achieving the MDGs. From 2002 to 2005 the project worked through 10 sector-specific task forces to devise a MDG implementation strategy, Investing in Development (2005). The project was folded under the BDP MDG Support Team in 2006.	xx		xx		In	Prepared the costing tools related to next item
6	Policy advisory & MDG costing	UNDP supported the integration of an MDG approach in national strategic planning documents such as the PRSPs, and calculation of financial and human resources needed to meet the MDGs in a given country (MDGs costing) in order to help mobilize resources for implementation. ²⁵³	x	xx	xxx		In	Core to the UNDP mandate and an interesting way to test national ownership of MDGs
7	MDG reporting	MDGRs are at the core of UNDP's niche in MDGs in that UNDP was identified as the 'MDG score keeper'. As chair of the UNDG and manager of the UN Resident Coordinator function, UNDP mobilizes UN support to prepare MDGRs for monitoring MDG achievement, engaging political leaders, and mobilizing civil society in a debate about human development. ²⁵⁴	x	xxx	xxx	x	In	Core UNDP role in MDGs (score keeper, UN coordination)
8	MDG Localization	Initially understood as the possibility for countries to adjust the MDG targets to their national context, the term 'MDG localization' was later used to describe efforts to raise awareness of MDGs at the community level and help local governments and civil society implement MDG-based local plans (reportedly with UNCDF, SNV, UN-Habitat). National averages on MDGs often mask marked differences across regions in a country, and MDG localization helps draw attention to pockets of poverty for targeted improvement of basic services.			xx	xxx	In	Could be interesting for countries that might not see MDGs as relevant for the country as a whole, but still have pockets of poverty

253 UNDP has developed tools to estimate the amounts and types of investments required to meet specific MDGs, including the Energy Costing Tool (2006), and the HIV/AIDS Costing Model for Asia and the Pacific (2013), including health, sanitation and gender tools.

254 While sponsoring and financing MDGRs is normally the government's responsibility, some resources can be secured in selected cases from the MTF (e.g. for design, printing, press launch, dissemination and translation). UNDP Regional and Central Bureaux (RBA and BDP) have funded MDGRs as well (for example through external resource mobilization and PTTF). BDP Poverty Group provides technical support and desk review of draft MDGRs, as well as training. There are also "shadow MDG reports" prepared by NGOs independently or with United Nations Millennium Campaign support. Since 2003, BDP has produced the MDG Country Report guidelines in collaboration with UNDG, to guide the reporting work at country level.

#	Items	Description	Main geographic focus				Proposal	Rationale
			Global	Regional	National	Local		
9	Millennium Villages	Headed by the Earth Institute at Columbia University, UNDP and Millennium Promise, the villages attempt to meet the MDGs through an integrated rural development approach. There are 14 villages chosen from different agro-ecological zones and in 'hunger hot spots' in 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. ²⁵⁵ UNDP's played a logistical and operational role, not managerial. In 2009, UNDP decided to step back from the programme, but to date the concerned UNDP Country Offices are still supporting Millennium Villages.		x	x	xxx	Out	A major undertaking to promote MDGs at national level, of which UNDP was sponsor & implementer, but evaluating it would be a project in itself. The main aspects of the experience will be described as contextual information.
10	MDG Acceleration Framework	Launched at the 2010 MDG Summit, the MAF aimed to identify bottlenecks and priorities for MDG achievement by drawing from past lessons. There is now a MAF process in some 52 countries across LAC, Africa, Asia and CIS.	x		xxx		In	Core UNDP role ('score keeping', planning, coordination, identify gaps, energize UN and other parties)
11	MDG climate proofing	In recognition that climate change impacts MDG achievement, UNDP provided advisory support for national adaptive capacity to adjust climate and energy policy accordingly. The MDG Carbon Facility is managed by the UNDP-GEF Unit.			xxx		Out	Seems to be the UNDP-GEF unit's strategy for adaptation to climate change, couched in terms of MDGs
12	Country-specific projects	Country Offices have developed specific projects and programmes in support of MDG achievement as part of their country programme. These country-specific projects oftentimes are backstopped by the above-listed streams of work, for example combining MDG policy advisory, monitoring and localization into one activity.			xxx	xx	In	Perhaps the largest vector of MDG-related assistance at country level, financially speaking—usually tied to another strand of work.

255 These villages include: Sauri and Dertu, Kenya; Koraro, Ethiopia; Mbola, Tanzania; Ruhiira, Uganda; Mayange, Rwanda; Mwandama, Malawi; Pampaida and Ikaram, Nigeria; Potou, Senegal; Tiby and Toya, Mali; and Bonsaaso, Ghana.

Appendix 2 to the Terms of Reference:

THEORY OF CHANGE

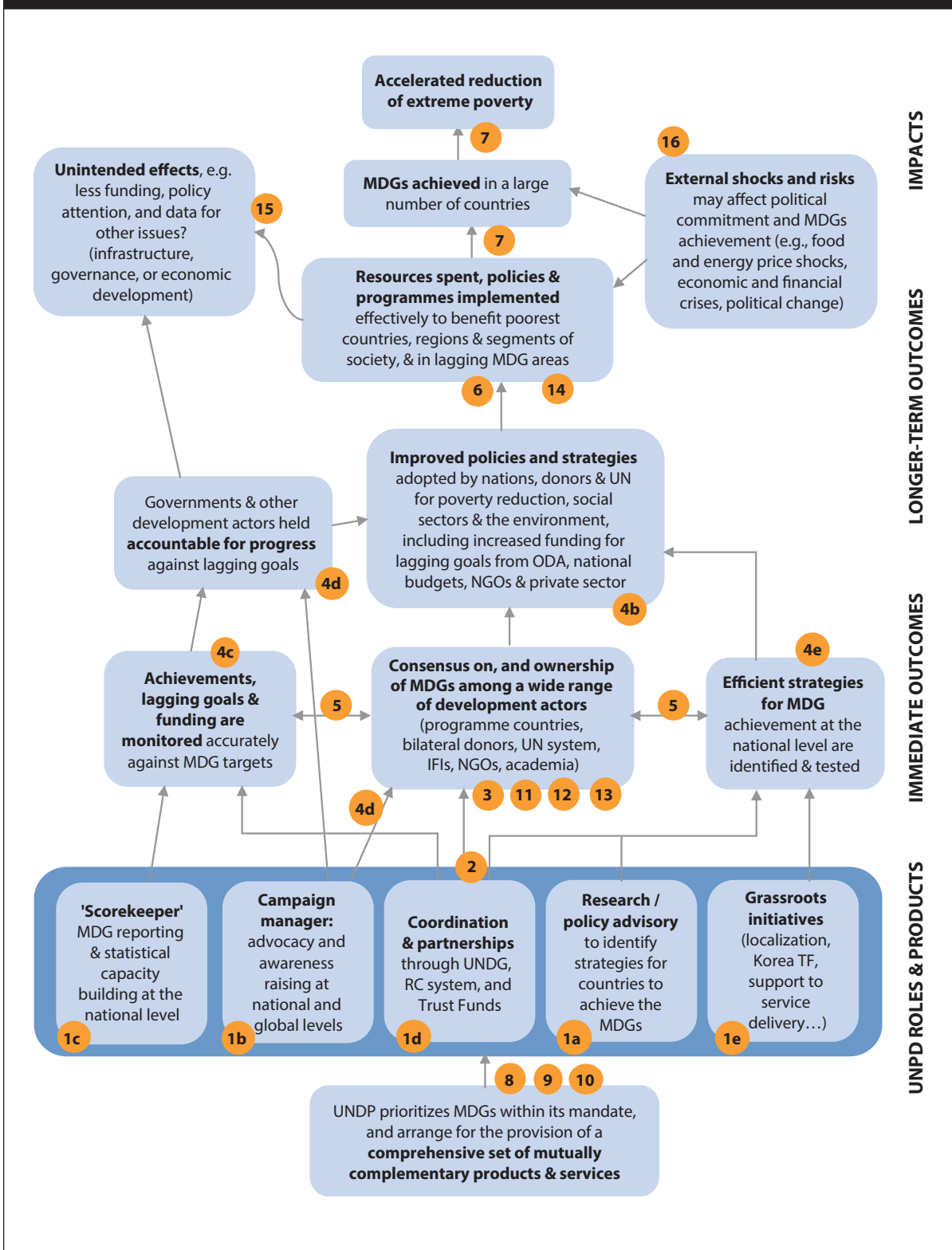
A “theory of change” (ToC) was developed based on the evaluation team’s interviews and desk review of UNDP strategies and programme activities. The ToC is an evaluation tool and process. As a tool, it attempts to map the causal relationships related to UNDP’s work towards MDG achievement within the scope of the evaluation, and as a result inform evaluation design. The ToC does not attempt to capture the complexity and multiplicity of pathways but rather present a simplified overview of what UNDP tried to achieve through its support. The ToC consequently will not be a holistic representation of how the entire UNDP programme seeks to contribute to MDG achievement.

The ToC was elaborated first by mapping UNDP’s core roles and then hypothesizing the intended outcomes and higher-level impact of this work. Each pathway was mapped with one or more associated assumptions, reflecting several dimensions—notably context (e.g. social, political, and resource conditions) and strategic

thinking (e.g. sequence of change). In turn, this set of assumptions informed further refinement of the evaluation’s main questions. In this iterative fashion, the ToC helped to identify a number of factors likely to affect UNDP’s performance and results at country level, including the inter-case variation of: (a) development context, (b) UNDP Country Office set up and (c) UNDP programme activities.

The ToC also represents a deeper reflective process and dialogue amongst UNDP colleagues and key stakeholders to articulate underlying assumptions of how and why change happens, which hopes thereby to strengthen the ToC mapping. As the ToC reflects both past and ongoing UNDP interventions across a span of over 10 years of UNDP work, this consultative role takes on significant importance to help clarify UNDP’s underlying theories and perceptions encapsulated in its major strategies. In addition, examining assumptions requires dialogue to compare ideas through questioning and to create a critical-thinking approach.

Theory of Change for UNDP Support to MDGs



- Notes: 1. The figure presents a simplified overview of what UNDP tried to achieve with its support to the MDGs.
 2. Arrows represent contributions or causation. Only the main pathways are drawn.
 3. Numbers refer to evaluation questions.

Appendix 3 to the Terms of Reference:

SELECTION OF COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

A. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation methodology includes twelve country case studies (CCS), as a way to collect rich information about complex, multi-strand UNDP engagement at the country level in the area of MDGs. It is envisaged that each CCS will be undertaken by one international and one national consultant. CCS will be complemented with other, less expensive data collection tools, such as an analysis of existing evaluations, including relevant ADRs and outcome evaluations.

The aim of the sample is to cover to the greatest possible extent the existing variability in programme countries, at the lowest possible cost (low number of case studies). Given the small size of the 'parent population' (some 135 UNDP programme countries), drawing a statistically representative sample would not be cost-effective.²⁵⁶ The evaluation uses a 'purposeful sample' which tries to cover, to the best our knowledge, the variability of factors and conditions that occur across programme countries.

This sample was selected with a view to analyse the country case studies with Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a social sciences method that helps describe and analyse complex causal pathways and interactions among causal factors. QCA provides better foundation for generalization across cases than less formal and more purely qualitative uses of case studies. In effect, QCA is thus a means to increase analytic rigor in the selection and analysis of case studies,

so as to strengthen their 'external validity' i.e. the extent to which the results of the case studies can be generalized to other cases.

QCA begins by identifying an 'outcome of interest' specific to the research in question. In this case, the outcome of interest is defined as the progress achieved towards MDG achievement during the evaluated period (2003–2014), although it may be possible to use in the QCA an outcome that is a bit closer to UNDP's engagement, e.g. "the country has significantly improved policies and allocated increased funding for poverty reduction, social sectors, and lagging goals."

A second step is to list categorical variables or factors that are expected to have a bearing on the outcome of interest, and to map all the actual different combinations of such factors (not all theoretically possible combinations of variables occur in real life). Correlations between variables are used to reduce the number of variables that are relevant to a particular research agenda. Case studies are then selected based on the most frequent combinations of the retained factors.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES

Based on a desk review and preliminary interviews with key informants, a 'theory of change' was designed for UNDP's support to MDGs. This theory of change identifies a number of factors likely to affect UNDP's performance and results at the country level, as follows:

256 To reach a confidence interval of $\pm 5\%$ at a confidence level of 95% would require a sample of 100 countries out of 135 programme countries.

a) **Development context:**

1. The current **state of development** of the programme country—as estimated through its Human Development Index (HDI) 2012 score and/or tier (low, medium, high, and very high) or through the UNDP country typology is thought to be a key determinant of how relevant the UNDP support to MDGs was perceived, and what particular type of support was needed.
2. **ODA levels**—as estimated through OECD/DAC data for 2002–2012—are assumed to be a factor because the MDGs were meant to inform and shape both ODA and national budgets and policies. It would therefore make sense to select most case study countries among those with significant ODA levels, but also to include in the sample a few countries with low ODA levels to test the UNDP MDG work effect on **national** budgets and policies.
3. MDGs have been hardest to achieve in **crisis countries**, yet there have been promising achievements in some that have emerged from crisis. The evaluation will have to review UNDP's roles in such contexts.

b) **UNDP Country Office set up:**

4. **Presence or absence of a Country Office**, since the capacity of UNDP to provide policy advisory is probably linked to its field presence.
5. **Presence or absence of a recent ADR**: a country case study would be inefficient where ADRs have recently been completed, e.g. a country like Brazil should be reviewed based on the recent ADR there, even though it would make an interesting case study. In these countries, the evaluation will use the results

of the ADRs instead of a stand-alone case study.

6. **Regional bureau concerned**, as Regional Bureaux have been important actors in promoting MDGs in UNDP in their respective regions.

c) **UNDP programme activities:**

7. **The comprehensiveness of UNDP engagement in country** was approximated by the mention of the following typical UNDP MDG 'activity strands' in ROARS and Country Office or BDP websites: Millennium Campaign; policy advisory and MDG costing; MDG Reports; MDG localization efforts; MAF projects; Korea Trust Fund projects; other country specific projects. Each strand was coded as 0 (absence) or 1 (presence) and all were summed up to arrive at a total number of different MDG strands pursued in country.
8. **The earliness of engagement as well as whether the engagement was sustained over time** were estimated through the date of the first MDGR publication and the total number of MDGRs in the country.
9. The **financial size of the UNDP MDG work in country** was approached through the level of expenditures for corporate outcomes identified as germane to MDGs in the 2008–2013 period.

C. REFINING SELECTION CRITERIA

These factors were further studied with a view to simplifying the list by identifying correlations between them:

- It was found the HDI score was strongly correlated with gross national income and with UNDP country typology. Therefore, **the HDI score was retained as the only indicator for state of development.**²⁵⁷

257 The Human Development Index is also conceptually coherent with the MDGs, more so than gross national product.

- The financial size of the UNDP MDG work in country and the number of MDG strands in which UNDP was active in country were combined into a simple categorical indicator called the **degree of UNDP MDG engagement in country** (low, medium, high), and constituted the second variable used to select country case studies.
- **ODA levels** per capita were not directly used to select the sample but a post-factum verification was made that some of the selected countries have low levels of ODA and others have a high ODA level.
- **One country emerging from crisis** was included in the proposed sample (Cambodia) as a way to review UNDP's role supporting MDGs in such contexts.
- Countries without a Country Office were found to correspond either to small island states or to developed countries, both cases in which the UNDP programmatic role is somewhat marginal. **Countries without Country Offices were thus excluded from the sample.**
- **Countries with ongoing ADRs and ADRs conducted since 2010** were excluded from the sample. The evaluation will try and secure MDG-specific inputs from the evaluators in charge on 2014 ADRs (Armenia, Malaysia, Somalia, Tanzania, Uruguay, Zimbabwe), and will extract the findings from relevant ADR reports.
- The earliness of engagement was found correlated with the regional bureaux (Africa with an early engagement, Asia-Pacific and LAC with a slightly later engagement). Since **the UNDP Region was retained as an important sample selection criterion, earliness of engagement was deemed redundant** and dropped from the list of QCA factors.

D. FINAL SELECTION

Thanks to these simplifications, the sample selection was therefore based on the following three criteria:

- Regional bureau (UNDP Region);
- HDI score for 2012 and/or tier (low, medium, high, and very high); and
- Degree of UNDP MDG engagement in country (low, medium, high).

It appears from the analysis of UNDP MDG engagement in country that UNDP has been more active in the MDG area in Africa and Asia Pacific than in Latin America,²⁵⁸ and more in Latin America than in Arab States and Europe. The sample was therefore skewed towards the first two regions. Based on a review of the actual combinations of these factors observed in each region, Table A presents the set of QCA variable combinations that was aimed at.

While the sample of CCS tries to include a few countries with a medium or low level of UNDP engagement (if only to understand why UNDP had a lower level of engagement in some countries than in others), it must be stressed that **it over-represents countries with a high degree of engagement, and under-represents those with a low degree of engagement.** This is because it would make little sense to spend too much time and resources studying countries where UNDP has not done much in terms of MDG support. However, the resulting bias should be taken into account during analysis and interpretation of results, so as not to assume that the country case studies sample is representative of all programme countries.

The proposed countries and programmes are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 in the main body of these terms of reference (section 6.

258 Latin America does have the largest proportion of MDG-related expenditure in corporate outcomes germane to MDGs, but this is an artefact due to large locally-resourced programmes in Argentina.

Methodology). Table 1 presents a summary of the MDG programmes in each selected country. The last column of Table 1 indicates alternative countries, which were found close to the proposed country in terms of the sample

selection criteria,²⁵⁹ and which could replace the proposed country in case the latter could not be included in the sample. Table 2 presents the status of the different MDG strands / roles in the selected sample.

Table A. Selected combinations of key QCA variables		
UNDP Region	HDI level	Degree of UNDP MDG engagement
Africa: 4 countries	3 countries with a low HDI	2 countries with a high engagement
		1 country with low or medium engagement
	1 with a medium HDI	High engagement
Asia-Pacific: 4 countries	1 country with a low HDI	High engagement
	3 with a medium HDI	2 countries with a high engagement
		1 country with low or medium engagement
Latin America-Caribbean: 2 countries	1 country with a medium HDI	Medium engagement
	1 with a high HDI	Medium engagement
Arab States: 1 country	1 country with a medium HDI	Medium engagement
Europe-CIS: 1 country	1 country with a high HDI	Medium engagement
Total: 12 countries	2 high HDI 5 medium HDI 5 low HDI	6 countries with high engagement 4 with medium engagement 2 with low or medium engagement

259 In regions with a generally low level of UNDP MDG engagement such as Europe and the CIS and Arab States, it was not possible to find alternatives that closely matched the main country's QCA criteria. E.g. Yemen is proposed as an alternative to Jordan in Arab States because UNDP undertook significant MDG work there, as in Jordan, although the development context in the two countries is not comparable.

Annex 2

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Annex 4

LIST OF MDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day
1.2 Poverty gap ratio
1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed
1.5 Employment-to-population ratio
1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day
1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age
1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education
2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary
2.3 Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds, women and men
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
4.1 Under-five mortality rate
4.2 Infant mortality rate
4.3 Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles

Goal 5: Improve maternal health
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
5.1 Maternal mortality ratio
5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health
5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate
5.4 Adolescent birth rate
5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)
5.6 Unmet need for family planning
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15–24 years
6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex
6.3 Proportion of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14 years
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it
6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria
6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets
6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs
6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest
7.2 CO ₂ emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)
7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
7.5 Proportion of total water resources used
7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development
Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries
Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)
Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
Official development assistance (ODA)*
8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income
8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes
8.5 ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes
Market access*
8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty
8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product
8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity
Debt sustainability*
8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI Initiatives
8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications
8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population
8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population
8.16 Internet users per 100 population

Note: * indicators for Goal 8 do not always correspond to one single target, and are presented under these headings of ODA, market access, and debt sustainability.

Source: UN MDGs monitoring site at mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation recommendation 1:

UNDP should organize a last round of Millennium Development Goal country reports (end-line reports) in 2016–2017 to measure progress over the entire period of the Goals, establish baselines for the sustainable development goal era and identify lessons learned and good practices. This will allow UNDP to establish programmes on a strong empirical basis of what forms of support worked and did not work during the Millennium Development Goal era. UNDP should continue support to the ‘unfinished Goals’ even after 2015, by helping to focus development efforts on the poorest countries as well as pockets of deprivation within middle- and high-income countries.

Management response:

UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts and notes the need to capitalize on the experience of UNDP with the Goals, to recommit to closing the unfinished business and to facilitate a smooth transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals.

With UNDP support as part of its scorekeeping role, countries have reported regularly on progress. Over 450 national reports have been produced to date. Several reports were also produced at the subnational level. These generate the evidence base to inform policies within countries, while also helping to extract cross-country trends and empowering national delegations within regional and global forums. A concluding round of national reports is expected to be produced by some countries in 2015–2016 to present a final stocktaking, establish national baselines for the sustainable development goals/post-2015 development agenda and facilitate a smooth transition to implementation and monitoring for this successor development agenda. Headquarters, regional service centres and UNDP Country Offices are providing the technical support needed for the preparation of these reports, upon demand.

From the lessons learned and evidence base gathered from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the following actions are proposed to tackle the ‘unfinished business’:

- Bringing less visible Goals back in focus (e.g. gender equality and empowerment of women; universal access to reproductive health and family planning; access to sanitation);
- Sustaining gains already made and achieving remaining targets;
- Reaching the ‘last mile’ by extending Goal-related gains to the entire population;
- Using disaggregated data to monitor development achievements.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
1.1. Based on demand, support a last round of country reports, in collaboration with the broader United Nations country team, with the aim to help countries estimate baselines for the sustainable development goals according to their current progress/status of the Millennium Development Goal indicators, as per data availability.	2015–2016	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), regional bureaux and regional service centres
1.2. Develop an online database of Millennium Development Goal indicators to provide the trend analysis per country based on the country report data, which would eventually support selected indicators for the sustainable development goals.	2015–2016	BPPS/Sustainable Development Cluster, in collaboration with regional bureaux and regional service centres
1.3. Use the country reports Millennium Development Goal indicator database to generate an initial sustainable development goal observatory to monitor several indicators.	September 2015–2016	BPPS, regional bureaux and regional service centres

Evaluation recommendation 2:

UNDP should continue to provide United Nations Member States and organizations with guidance and thought leadership at the level of the entire sustainable development goals agenda, on how to translate the post-2015 agenda to the national and subnational levels by establishing clear local priorities, while maintaining some degree of comprehensiveness and coherence with the global agenda.

Management response:

UNDP welcomes this recommendation and agrees that 2015 provides an opportunity to leverage the experience and mandate of UNDP to successfully transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals. Products and services such as the MAF, guidelines for Goal monitoring at country level, the several tools to support the development of Goal-based national development strategies and the evidence base generated for successful negotiations and discussions related to the sustainable development goals can be suitably transformed to meet part of what is needed to guide the implementation of those goals beyond 2015. At the same time, the period leading up to the United Nations Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be one of intense activity on the part of Member State and civil society, with a continuing demand for definitive analysis and evidence, until the global development agenda has been negotiated in detail. Knowledge about how implementation actually worked for the Millennium Development Goals in different countries and at the subnational level will help to inform these discussions and localization of the sustainable development goals. UNDP will also strengthen its existing collaboration with United Nations regional commissions to support actions towards the achievement and monitoring of the sustainable development goals at the regional level.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
2.1. Prepare a forward-looking, evidence-based report illustrating: (a) lessons learned and implications of the Millennium Development Goals for the post-2015 agenda implementation; (b) how and to what extent UNDP support to the Millennium Development Goal agenda can pave the way for the transition towards the sustainable development goals (e.g. localization, monitoring efforts and use of disaggregated data to take better account of inequalities at subnational level, identification of implementation bottlenecks, including governance and capacity deficits, vulnerabilities to natural and man-made disasters); (c) relevance of the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals for the sustainable development goals, across different country typologies (e.g. including middle-income countries) and identification of lessons where similar 'relevance versus comparability' trade-offs can happen (e.g. process of nationalization of indicators and the need for relevant guidelines and methodologies, disaggregation of targets and indicators and relevant budget considerations); and (d) identify/map best practices implemented by countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, which have already been subject to South-South cooperation and that could help other countries to move forward on the unfinished business of the Goals and the future sustainable development goals.	September 2015	BPPS/Sustainable Development Cluster in coordination with respective regional service centres
2.2. As a key part of the corporate strategy, evolve the MAF into a new sustainable development goal implementation tool including diagnostics to assess bottlenecks, costings and response strategies to address prioritized bottlenecks.	2015–2016	BPPS and regional service centres, in collaboration with regional bureaux
2.3. In consultation with United Nations Development Group partners, design and launch the successor to the United Nations Millennium Campaign to serve as a campaigning and accountability movement to monitor implementation of the sustainable development goals from a people's perspective.	2015–2016	BPPS/United Nations Millennium Campaign

2.4. Develop policy advocacy pieces focusing on the sustainable development goals and utilizing the lessons learned from the experience of the Millennium Development Goals.	2015	BPPS, regional bureaux and regional service centres
2.5. Use mainstreaming of the Millennium Development Goals into national planning expertise and lessons learned to develop approaches and strategies for mainstreaming the sustainable development goals into national-/subnational-level planning.	2015–2016	BPPS, regional bureaux and regional service centres
<p>Evaluation recommendation 3:</p> <p>While the post-2015 global agenda presents new challenges, the ‘roles’ UNDP played during the Millennium Development Goal era will remain useful and should be carried forward and enhanced for greater effectiveness</p>		
<p>Management response:</p> <p>UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and notes that UNDP will take further actions to ensure that institutional memory is preserved and that lessons learned are well documented to help countries deliver better. UNDP will undertake a comprehensive stocktaking and mapping of the activities it has supported during the Millennium Development Goal period to effectively codify lessons learned on ‘what has worked and what has not’ so as to inform its knowledge products, tools and services offered in the post-2015 period.</p>		
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
<p>3.1. Continue to support the Millennium Development Goal acceleration reviews of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), including:</p> <p>a. Preparations for two additional sessions (in April and November 2015) including country cases on areas not previously covered;</p> <p>b. Monitor commitments undertaken by United Nations agencies and the World Bank under the scope of the initiative.</p>	November 2015	BPPS/Sustainable Development Cluster, in collaboration with Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and relevant regional bureaux
<p>3.2. Provide guidance on the future of the CEB Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Review Initiative, including:</p> <p>a. Elaborate a paper with clear recommendations on the lessons learned to promote better collaboration and synergy across the United Nations system, in line with the ‘fit for purpose’ recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development;</p> <p>b. In consultation with United Nations agencies and the World Bank, define a set of options for the post-2015 period, which builds on the CEB Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Review model.</p>	November 2015	BPPS/Sustainable Development Cluster

Evaluation recommendation 4:

UNDP support to countries and local governments in tailoring, planning and implementing the sustainable development goals at the national and local levels should take into systematic consideration key local factors known to influence the effectiveness of goal-based development planning, so as to minimize tokenism and focus assistance onto countries and regions with good prospects for implementing their sustainable development goal-based plans and policies.

Management response:

UNDP takes note of this recommendation, but notes that action on the ground is primarily motivated by demand from countries.

Over the transitional period 2015–2016, UNDP will continue to deliver on its mandate and commitments to support countries to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, while also transitioning to the implementation of the successor agenda. The UNDP role in supporting countries to achieve the Goals encompasses three pillars, which will provide good experience and evidence for transitioning to the sustainable development goals. Specifically, UNDP will adopt a forward- looking strategy comprising:

1. Implementation: Continue supporting countries in their efforts to develop and implement strategies and plans to achieve the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, including acceleration efforts and developing tools to localize the sustainable development goals;
2. Monitoring: As ‘scorekeeper’ for the Millennium Development Goals, assisting in monitoring progress at the country level and supporting countries to reflect on implications and pathways for achievement of the sustainable development goals. There is a need to embed prospective analysis and multisectoral perspectives in the next round of monitoring efforts;
3. Advocacy and thought leadership: Make available evidence-based advocacy and analysis supporting specific outcomes in multilateral and global forums.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
4.1. The UNDP policy framework on inclusive growth to address social exclusion and inequality.	2015	BPPS, regional bureaux and regional service centres
4.2. Prepare a handbook on mainstreaming environment for poverty reduction and sustainable development.	August 2015	BPPS
4.3. Re-launch UNDP support to countries to institutionalize and conduct costing, prioritization and identification of funding gaps and opportunities, and to strengthen management systems for financing sustainable development.	2015–2016	BPPS, regional bureaux and regional service centres
4.4. Compile a menu of options for providing support to financial planning functions in central and sector ministries to plan, fund and implement sectoral strategies.	2015	BPPS and regional service centres

Evaluation recommendation 5:

In order to support country programmes and learn from field-level experiences in implementation of the sustainable development goals, UNDP should establish and maintain over time a strong, stable cadre of dedicated advisors at headquarters and in regional hubs, able to support the regional bureaux and Country Offices' work related to the sustainable development goals over the long term, bring coherence to the overall effort and maintain some institutional memory. UNDP should document the varied approaches that will be used at the country level in a more systematic and objective way than has been the case so far. Resource mobilization and the management of trust funds also need to be brought into a more coherent framework to support country-level activities.

Management response:

The structural change at headquarters and regional levels is expected to produce a more functionally and geographically integrated organization to deliver on the current Strategic Plan. The restructuring is delivering an optimized regional presence with more advisory and support services moving to the regional level, to help Country Offices deliver quality results more efficiently, which will benefit the implementation of the sustainable development goals. With the establishment of the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, all policy and programme support services are aggregated under a single bureau. At the same time, a new Crisis Response Unit was established in order to deploy staff with the relevant expertise on the ground more promptly and efficiently as crises develop. Combined with the rationalization of management support and a new accountability framework, the new structure will make UNDP a leaner and more transparent organization. UNDP will take further actions to ensure that institutional memory is preserved and that lessons learned are well documented to help countries deliver.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
No action required	--	--



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